Organisational Dystopia: Surrealist Paintings for Critical Management Studies

by

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Lauren Schrock, declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

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Abstract

This thesis responds to a call to bring humanities into organisation studies. The researcher analyses and interprets contemporary Surrealist paintings for understanding organisational dystopia. While organisational dystopia is not new to the field of Critical Management Studies (CMS), it is a concept enriched by a variety of imaginative stances addressing marginalised or silenced experiences of work life. One such area of imagination is painting. Paintings have historically examined work as a subject of art, yet art has been missed in organisation studies. To address this issue, as well as contribute further to an understanding of organisational dystopia, this thesis presents a case for expanding the field of culture studies in CMS by looking into Surrealism and paintings.

This thesis is one of the first of its kind to analyse and interpret paintings in the discipline of organisation studies. The researcher formulates an original framework for examining the contemporary Surrealist paintings by the artist Tetsuya Ishida, who represents the dark, gloomy dystopia of Japanese salarymen. The framework is a system to analyse form (material) and content (meaning), and to interpret paintings. Through this devised framework, paintings are analysed and interpreted in response to two research questions: *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* and *What are themes of organisational dystopia?*

The researcher elaborates on organisational dystopia in two ways. First, in the identification of qualities of organisational dystopia, including objectification of labour. Second, in the recognition of themes of organisational dystopia, such as a totalitarian control of private space and complexities of escaping or enduring a dystopia. By addressing organisational dystopia, the researcher presents a warning about the darkness of progress. This research contributes in the two main ways: adding to knowledge on organisational dystopia and arguing that paintings are a valuable method to research design. Thus, this thesis presents a way forward for organisation studies to investigate concepts and criticisms via imagination and art.

To reduce the imagination to a state of slavery

- even though it would mean the elimination of what is commonly called happiness -

is to betray all sense of absolute justice within oneself.

Imagination alone offers me some intimation of what can be.

André Breton, First Surrealist Manifesto (1924)

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley's protagonist John the 'Savage' faces a dilemma: to live in the civilisation of World State or return to the crude village of his upbringing. "At the time this book was written, this idea, that human beings are given free will in order to choose between insanity on the one hand [World State] and lunacy on the other [primitive village], was one that I found amusing and regarded as quite possibly true", wrote Huxley (1946:xlii). "And at the close, of course, he [the Savage] is made to retreat from sanity … he ends in maniacal self-torture and despairing suicide."

In the despair of facing two extreme alternatives, to return to an extremely uncivilised past or to press forward into a totalising civilised future, the Savage turns away from either option. Instead, the Savage ends his resistance and hangs himself. To escape from the choice between two alternatives through suicide is a more serious consequence of the belief that "ending is better than mending" (Huxley 2007:42).

Brave New World, like many of its dystopian ancestors and descendants, draws on extremes based in imaginative settings in order to frighten and shock readers into avoiding negative, real outcomes. For example, Huxley (1946) wrote, "The theme of *Brave New World* is not the advancement of science as such; it is the advancement of science *as it affects human individuals*" (p. xliv). Hence, a dystopia is concerned with how changes in society, such as technology, environmentalism, politics, managerialism, labour, and feminism, impact the real life of people.

In the genre of dystopia, there are two important questions: how is a dystopia reached? And how does one remedy a dystopia? The former question addresses the conditions of the past that historically lead to the development of dystopia. This can be changes in human beliefs, technologies, and norms. The latter question concerns how the frightful conditions of the future can be escaped, avoided, or reversed. Often the escape from a literary dystopia is crafted as a movement of a person from one site to another, however, in cases like *Brave New World,* escape can be suicide.

The improvement, development and change in today's organisations is due to a concern for future performance. This ideal of future achievement is reflected on and critiqued by dystopia. This is because a dystopia argues the dark side of human

progress and the non-idealism of managerial perfection. Therefore, the dystopia is an important area in which to examine the darkness of organisations.

To examine organisational dystopia, this thesis resides in an academic field called Critical Management Studies (CMS). CMS is an area that challenges dominant organisational rhetoric and practice by encouraging the use of alternative research methods to critically examine and reflect on organisational situations and sites (Adler, Forbes and Willmott 2007; Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott 2009; Fournier and Grey 2000). Similar to dystopia, one aspect of CMS is to question and reflect on the notion of 'progress' and what it means from different perspectives such as feminism or Marxism (Spicer, Alvesson and Kärreman 2009). Dystopia is an interesting area to explore for management and organisation since dystopia is under-researched. One of the reasons why a dystopia is under-researched is because it uses the imagination. This imagination is the connection between reality and pure fantasy. This is how a dystopia can present a 'nightmare' of management and organisation (Hillegas 1967; Manguel 2003; Stableford 2010; Vieira 2010). This imagination is how a dystopia can draw attention to the extreme qualities of working life that are typically rendered invisible to empirical research. Since it is difficult to investigate the imagination through empirical methods when it is hidden in the mind.

Since dystopia relies on imagination, dystopias are predominantly evidenced in literature (e.g. Huxley 2007). However, the dystopia as a genre has grown to encapsulate additional culture forms, such as film, television, and art. This last form of dystopia is the area this research focuses on since art, specifically paintings, are rarely used for research. Paintings are unique visual images to explore the dystopian imagination since an image crosses linguistic and geographical boundaries. And paintings are a way to promote interdisciplinary methodologies for organisation study. Paintings have the ability to draw observers into an imagination (Hart 1968) and express cultural representation by aesthetic impact (Buster and Crawford 2010; Danto 2013; Freeland 2001). Paintings, as a gateway to accessing the imagination in visual form, is a way to move beyond the limits of empirical research since paintings are a path to investigate internal experiences of the world that are made visible via material. In this research, I look at paintings made by a Japanese Surrealist artist named Tetsuya Ishida, who used dark acrylic paints to convey despairing moods and dystopian work settings.

Within Ishida's oeuvre, focus is given to the representation of Japanese salarymen. A Japanese salaryman is a stereotype of bureaucratic, masculine labour in Japan (Dasgupta 2013; Hidaka 2010). The Japanese salaryman is an interesting figure to consider for organisation studies since they are under-represented in Anglo-American research or high ranking publications (as an exception, see Matanle, McCann and Ashmore 2008). As a result, there is little academic awareness to the conditions of work faced by salarymen. Second, Japanese salarymen are an integral feature of Japanese society and work (Lewis 2016). By drawing attention to this specific identity, this thesis adds to an understanding of constraint and complexity that plague a salaryman's life.

A goal of this research is to justify paintings as a new research design for organisation scholars to observe and interpret work-related understandings and experiences. Paintings have received minimal attention by organisational scholars, yet paintings are prominently featured in the works of well-known authors, including the philosopher Michel Foucault, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, and the academic Michel de Certeau. Thus, paintings have a history in supporting and communicating theory and research, even though paintings are not common in evidencing organisational research. Paintings are also a way to bring the humanities into organisation studies in order to better focus and understand the human being (Czarniawska 2016; Czarniawska-Joerges 2006). Since paintings, an evidence of human creation and imagination, are a means to address the invisible experiences of human life. For these reasons, this research argues that artworks are a way forward for organisational research design.

This chapter introduces the thesis in three sections. The first section sets a frame for looking at art as a triad of form, content, and practice. The reason art is able to be critical of organisation, management, and work is due to representation. The second section overviews theoretical foundations of this thesis. Also, the section presents the two research questions in order to situate where and how this research will contribute. Finally, the third section presents a structure to the reading of this thesis as a journey through art, CMS, and dystopia.

1.2 What is a painting?: Painting as form, content, and representation

Before progressing further, I want to speak about paintings. Painting, a category within the discipline of art, is a specific type of artistic material. The genres of painting are characterised as a meeting between form and content that is continuously in tension due to advances in technique and production (Buster and Crawford 2010; Carroll 1997; Davies 2016; Klinke 2014; Roholt 2013). This is because genres of art are unstable given changes in styles, materials, and creation. Paintings are a form of high art for two reasons. One reason is that paintings usually reside within respected institutions like museums. A second reason is that paintings represent cultural values, historical moments, and social storytelling, which is why paintings exist in museums.

While paintings are highly valuable as a culture form, paintings are not welcomed as a research method. This is a long-standing issue raised by the famous artist Leonardo da Vinci. A collection of writings by Leonardo da Vinci was compiled posthumously in the 1500s by his pupil Francesco Melzi (Kemp 1989). This anthology, known as *Codex Urbinas,* was an assemblage of essays in which da Vinci argued that painting is as important as scientific methods. Da Vinci, cited in Kemp (1989), wrote, "Since painting does not achieve its ends through words, it is placed below the…sciences through ignorance, but it does not on this account lose its divinity" (p. 13). In summary, Da Vinci argues that paintings are a great source of human knowledge, even though that knowledge is not based in a verbal language. In the aim to value art as equally as the sciences, da Vinci set forth principles of art by codifying the elements of a painting and formulating a practice for observation. The principles were a way to treat art as a science, and therefore value art as much as science.

The attempt by da Vinci to treat art as a science is a continued effort. Today the development of technology, such as the capacity to microscopically view a painting's construction, is part of that effort. Stanley and Mayer (2001) write, "Assisted by the optical microscope and various other techniques that aid the eye, we can…reveal a relationship between the elemental structures within a particle of pigment, for example, and the images on the surface of the painting" (p. 9). The advancement of

science has given a greater depth to the observation of material elements (Kemp 1989). The use of scientific tools and techniques to learn more about the form or material of the painting, including paint layers, image alterations, and traces of initial sketches, are important to the restoration of art. In addition the use of science reveals information about the process of painting. The knowledge of art restoration and painting is important to the field since this is how art is "more nobler than that of nature" since art can be preserved while life cannot (Da Vinci, cited in Kemp 1989:35).

In contrast to the treatment of art as a science, art is also analysed and interpreted as a cultural artefact of creativity and content (Barrett 1994, 2000; Buster and Crawford 2010; Carr 2003; Hatt and Klonk 2006; Kieran and Lopes 2007; Roholt 2013). It is in this sense that a painting represents meaning in human life in contrast to the scientifically understood practices of painting. For this reason, analysing paintings as culture requires an examination beyond form. Therefore, paintings are also investigated as a communication of a message, idea, or value (Barrett 1994, 2000; Buster and Crawford 2010; Klinke 2014; Krippendorff 2004; Panofsky 1955; Roholt 2013; Stecker 2002). Hence, a painting can defined as an object (form) and also as communication (content).

One of the early proponents to argue for the importance of art as a communication of values was Josiah Holbrook (1834), leader of the lyceum movement in the United States. He argued that art is important to cultural legacy, since paintings portray history and character. Holbrook (1834) wrote, "All that is most valuable in the universe is brought before our eyes by painting; the heroic deeds of ancient times, as well as the facts with which we are more conversant; and distant objects, as well as those which we daily see" (p. 3). From portraits to landscapes, Holbrook (1834) sets the argument that paintings are the refinement of human creativity and a way to communicate life lessons and values from one generation to the next, and from one population to another.

The view that paintings convey ideas, values, and history is of significance to disciplines like art history and sites of organising, such as museums (Bennett 1995; Duncan 1994). Since artworks communicate information about a culture, event, or era, paintings can be analysed and interpreted for their content (Barrett 1994, 2000; Buster and Crawford 2010; Krippendorff 2004; Roholt 2013). Therefore, artworks are

qualitative data. Hence, paintings are a type of visual source to analyse in response to research questions (Bell and Davison 2013; Holbrook 1834; Kunter and Bell 2006; Pink 2012).

I have established thus far that a painting can be an object and communication. In addition, painting is also an action. For instance, Gaut and Lopes (2013) define painting as "a pattern of marks inscribed by movements of the artist's body" (p. 626). Or Elkins (1999) simply state that painting is a verb. When framing painting as a practice or 'way of doing', this opens paintings into a larger network of interactions, such as intentionality (Barrett 1994, 2000; Briesen 2014; Kieran and Lopes 2007; Klinke 2014; Roholt 2013; Stecker 2002). This refers to a specific debate on whether art is intentionally created or unconsciously made. Artistic intent is significant to address because intentionality determines meaning and form. Intention is also an organisational quality since the deliberate use of strokes and colour generate structure and an order of visual elements. Therefore, when painting is analysed as an action, this is another type of knowledge to access when studying artworks.

This section presents painting in three definitions: a material object, a conveyor of content, and a practice. These three elements are significant when it comes to the formulation of a method for analysis and interpretation of paintings (see Chapter 4). The combination of these three parts suggests that there are layers to a research method designed to analyse and interpret art, just as there are layers to the analysis of interviews as qualitative data. The triad of form, content, and practice are relevant components to evaluate the robustness and persuasiveness of an interpretation as these three components triangulate into an overall experience of observing art. This is one of the reasons why paintings are strong sources for understanding management and work.

An additional layer of analysis is genre, or the specific category, in which a painting belongs. Genres of art are socially constructed since "the way we categorise them depends on our interests" (Davies 2003:155; Berger and Luckmann 1991[1966]). For instance, paintings can be categorised by form (material), content (message), time (e.g. date of creation), or artist (Buster and Crawford 2010; Davies 2016; Hatt and Klonk 2006; Klinke 2014; Levinson 1996, 2003). The construction of categories, like genre, explains how artworks can reside together in a curated collection or as a theme of a museum (Freeland 2001). Genres organise art into categories of artistic

movements, such as Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, and Modern Art. The paintings examined in this thesis are part of a Surrealist genre. When art is analysed within its genre, this signifies themes in style and meaning. For example, the style of Ishida's paintings are imaginative, represent contradiction, and play on the irrationality of reality like other paintings by Surrealist artists, including René Magritte and Salvador Dalí (Waldberg 1965; see Chapter 3).

Surrealism is a movement and genre that has been approached by organisation and management scholars such as Carr (2003), Carr and Zanetti (2000), Carr and Hancock (2003), Corbett (2009), and Zanetti (2007). However, these scholars who approach Surrealism avoid treating Surrealist paintings as data, and therefore miss the visualisation of contradiction, irrationality, and organisational criticism. Consequently, the use of Surrealist paintings as a data source to theorise about organisations remains a gap for research.

I have thus far discussed the components of a painting and the identification of painting through categories like genre. Next, I want to speak about how art is useful for exploring the imagination, which is where (organisational) dystopia resides. Art is a means to address the imagination through representation. Representation "is about something" (Roholt 2013:63) that is manifested through a visual portrayal in which the image is abstracted from the real world (Buster and Crawford 2010). Pollock (1988) summarises the definitions of representation:

> Representation needs to be defined in several ways. As representation the term stresses that images and texts are no mirrors of the world, merely reflecting their sources. Representation stresses something refashioned, coded in rhetorical, textual or pictorial terms, quite distinct from its social existence. Representation can also be understood as 'articulating' in a visible or socially palpable form social processes which determine the representation but then are actually affected and altered by the forms, practices and effects of representation (p. 8).

In essence, there are three types of representation that Pollock (1988) confirms in this quote. The first type of representation is when the artwork refers to itself. In this case the content of a painting is completely without reference to reality ('no mirrors of

the world'). Hence, the painting is abstract. The second type of representation is when the image of a painting is abstracted from reality to an extent so that the visual elements are a combination of reality and imagination ('distinct from its social existence'). This is the type of representation that is depicted in Surrealism, which combine both reality and imagination into a 'surreality' (Breton 1924). The final type of representation is a painting based in realism, which means the image of the painting is as close to reality as possible ('articulation'). For example, painters that intentionally attempt to create accurate depictions of everyday situations (Buster and Crawford 2010).

Surrealist paintings are visual representations that take influence from reality and imagination. Surrealist artworks originate within reality in that the people, objects and settings depicted in paintings are realistic. However, the painting is also imaginative, since the placement and visual relationship between people, objects and settings are unrealistic. Thus, Surrealist artworks, as imaginative portrayals distinct from reality, are a visual space to voice criticism of reality. This is due to the estrangement from reality. Therefore, Surrealist paintings are an opportunity to reflect and revise how the world is seen (Breton 1925b, 1936).

Categorising the type of representation is dependent on a person's ability to sense or identify reality in the image (Hyman 2015). As Quigley (2001) theorises, an identification of reality in a painting is due to an observer's feeling or intuition about reality, or the visual evidence of real persons or objects. For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to recognise features of reality in an image in order to ensure there is a reference to contemporary organisations for the purpose of making a persuasive contribution to organisation studies.

Tetsuya Ishida is the chosen artist for this research due to the recognisable real elements in his paintings that reference bureaucratic work and industrial labour. In addition, his paintings feature Japanese salarymen, who are presented in a typical 'business armour' of a suit and tie (Dasgupta 2000, 2013; Thomas 2013). By portraying these salarymen in different situations at work, Ishida's paintings draw the observer to gaze at the organisational life of salarymen. In his paintings, Ishida presents an organisational dystopia in which salarymen are objectified, without privacy, and unable to escape the hell of work. Hence Ishida's paintings depict a specific version of an organisational dystopia featuring Japanese salarymen.

1.3 Art for organisations

Paintings are a unique material in which to analyse and interpret experiences and criticisms, and also reflect about organisations and management. In order to address paintings for their image, thus laying the groundwork for paintings as a contribution to research methods in organisation studies, I weave together Critical Management Studies (CMS), dystopia, and Surrealism with paintings as the meeting point for these three areas. CMS is one of the research locations since it fosters critical theories and unconventional methodologies that use alternative types of data. In addition, dystopia fits with the aims of CMS researchers to problematise and challenge normative stances about conditions and experiences of work by taking an imaginative departure from reality (Booker 1992; Claeys 2010; Jameson 2010; Löwy 2009). Therefore, paintings that represent organisational dystopia are a way to critique organisations and management.

Surrealism is an area to draw CMS attention to and address representation of organisational dystopia. Surrealism is a social movement and artistic genre that has generally been overlooked by organisational scholars, except for a few rare instances previously mentioned. In this organisational scholarship that has looked at Surrealism, there is no established tie between Surrealism and dystopia. Also none of the research embraced Surrealist paintings as material for study. Hence, this thesis contributes to the field by approaching a specific knowledge about organisations (i.e. organisational dystopia) through an analysis and interpretation of paintings. As mentioned previously, this research analyses and interprets paintings by contemporary Surrealist artist Tetsuya Ishida, who represents an organisational dystopia of bureaucratic work with references to industrial labour.

To guide this study through the areas of CMS, dystopia, and Surrealism are two research questions. The first research question asks: *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* And the second questions reflects: *What are themes of organisational dystopia?* These two questions are purposefully broad in order to allow for a wide scope of imagination that can draw inspiration from different theoretical frames, including critical theory, Foucault, and Marx, without a theoretical constraint to remain steadfast to a single lens of analysis. These two research questions are important to CMS and organisation studies for two reasons. First, identifying the qualities of dystopia is necessary in order to better conceptualise what an

organisational dystopia is. Second, analysing and interpreting the paintings for themes is a way to extract overarching ideas within Ishida's images that convey criticism to organisational life.

When examining organisational dystopia, I draw on organisational research that criticises exploitive and abusive conditions of control. Academics such as Costas and Fleming (2009), Deetz (2003), Fleming and Spicer (2007), Grant and Shields (2010), and Knights and Willmott (1989) identify negative effects of subjugation and alienation in empirical evidence of labour mistreatment. Subjugation and alienation are consequences of managerial control and practice (Townley 1993) and surveillance measures (Clegg and Courpasson 2007). However, since these academics focus their analysis and criticism of subjugation and alienation to empirical research, there is a gap to address non-empirical data. This gap is the area of opportunity to address organisational dystopia, imagination, and art.

Dystopia, or the worst imaginable, is an important perspective in which to gaze at organisations because it problematises the trajectory of reality (Manguel 2003). For example, aspects of organisational life like subjugation and alienation are taken to the extreme in an organisational dystopia. Therefore, subjugation and alienation are under investigation for how, in their nightmarish condition, they can lead to feelings of despair, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation. Thus, an organisational dystopia is a warning to what subjugation and alienation can be if they progress in future reality.

It is established that a dystopia can problematise and reflect on conditions, events, or persons in reality so as to to incite change (Claeys 2010; Gordin, Tilley and Prakash 2010; Parker 2002b; Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007; Snodgrass 1996). An organisational dystopia is a specific type of dystopia that addresses a nightmare of work life in order to propose an escape, avoidance, or reversal of modern progress. Or, as I argue in the analysis of themes of organisational dystopia, if a person can cope with an organisational dystopia.

I use these two research questions as a guide to analyse and interpret the artworks by Tetsuya Ishida. Using a method that addresses a painting's form and content to ground an interpretation, this research aims to contribute to theory, method and practice. Furthermore, as one of the first of its kind to examine paintings for organisational research, this thesis aims to bring the humanities to the heart of

organisational scholarship by bridging a connection between art and organisations (Czarniawska 2016; Czarniawska-Joerges 2006).

1.4 Research aims and contributions

This thesis is an interdisciplinary project that connects art and organisations. As part of an agenda to bring the human side to organisation studies (Czarniawska 2016; Czarniawska-Joerges 2006), this thesis argues that paintings are a relevant, valuable addition to the research designs in interdisciplinary research. In order to do this, one of my contributions is the creation of a framework to analyse and interpret paintings for organisational scholarship. A second contribution is to theory, including a problematisation of organisational objectification and a control of private space. A third contribution is to practical implications, such as to encourage curation as an alternative to conferences, and to propose an alternative practice in critical education.

One of the main arguments of this thesis is to persuade scholars that artworks are valuable data for organisational research. The image is argued by organisational scholars as important evidence of the inarticulate or hidden aspects of organising and organisation (Cohen, Hancock and Tyler 2006; Holbrook 1834; Pink 2012; Stiles 2013; Wagner 2011). This argument is used for supporting the analysis of images that take from the empirical, such as photography (e.g. Cohen, Hancock and Tyler 2006). However, this argument should also extend to paintings since the painted image references reality while also fostering a space to exhibit the emotional and imaginative, which are hidden in the mind. As visual representation, paintings reveal 'aboutness' of organisations and work that cannot be reached by interview, ethnography, or other empirical methods (Roholt 2013). Since paintings are a way to access the imagination, this is an interdisciplinary opportunity to expand the repertoire of CMS and organisation studies to account for the human side of organisational work.

In order to bring paintings to the centre of organisational inquiry, I construct a method to understand paintings. I develop a framework to addressing the Surrealist paintings by Tetsuya Ishida in three approaches: one to form, a second to content, and a third to interpretation. By addressing paintings in this way, I was able to move the centre of analysis from the material (form), to representations of meaning (content), and to interpretation, which is a response to the research questions. The purpose of this framework to make the understanding of paintings transparent, communicable, and

verifiable. This is important since in a discipline of art, ‘methods’ to analysis and interpretation remain unarticulated or formulated so as to eliminate boundaries of an observer's imagination to conceive of meaning (Buster and Crawford 2010; Holbrook 1834; Rothko 2006).

Since the framework I construct is specific to Surrealism and paintings by Tetsuya Ishida, this framework does not have universal application. However, the method is a contribution in that it opens a methodological exploration into an interdisciplinary approach to organisation studies using paintings. In addition, this framework is a contribution for future researchers to draw inspiration from as they construct their own means to analyse and interpret paintings.

A contribution of this thesis is to evidence and support organisational theory, while also providing inspiration to further theorise about work and organisations. There are two theoretical contributions this thesis makes. The first contribution to theory is on organisational objectification. Organisational scholars have addressed objectification as a ‘managerial utopia’ or aim of a knowledge-control agenda of human resource management (Grant and Shields 2010; Townley 1993). While research on objectification fosters a criticism to the progress of management practices and organisational cultures, this body of research is constrained to empirical evidence. Therefore, an investigation into the imaginative essence of paintings offers a way to further problematise objectification since, in the horror of organisational dystopia, objectification is raised as a human concern.

The control of private space is another important contribution of my research. When viewing paintings, observers see practices that remain silent or ignored in organisations. For example, going to the toilet or rooftop in order to obtain privacy during the workday. As a result, paintings are a way to access experiences of work that are not common to organisational scholarship. Therefore, the paintings of Ishida are inspiration to further theory about privacy at work and sites of resistance and control, such as the toilet and rooftop.

In addition to these contributions, this study also furthers the present knowledge on dystopia. In particular, this study on organisational dystopia undermines the ‘paradox of dystopia’ by arguing that a dystopia is not ‘either-or’ but ‘and-both’. The paradox of dystopia refers to the contradiction that a dystopia is a place of no escape (thus to be endured) or dystopia as a place to escape from (Claeys 2010;

Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007; Rhodes 2004). This presents a dualism in which a dystopia is presented as hopeless or hopeful. However, when analysing the paintings by Tetsuya Ishida, it is apparent that there is a combination of enduring (no escape) and hopefulness (escape from) in the representation of organisational dystopia. Hence, this thesis finds organisational dystopia as a complexity of 'and-both' in which hopelessness and hopefulness are both present.

This research also contributes in two practical ways. First, the curation of paintings is argued as an alternative to orthodox practices of research dissemination, including publications and conferences. Curation, a practice of organisation commonly used in museums and galleries to structure meanings (Martinon 2013), is a way for organisational research to reach new audiences, especially those external to academia. Second, this interdisciplinary approach to organisation studies using paintings is a practice that can be used for fostering Critical Management Education (Grey 2004). By bringing artworks into the classroom, students and teachers can embrace an imaginative side to learning about work, management, and organisation. This imaginative side to paintings is an exercise that provides an imaginative space to conceive of criticism and reflection.

Therefore, this thesis argues that a way forward for CMS and organisation studies is to use paintings as research data. This interdisciplinary study is a way to bring humanities into organisation studies (Czarniawska 2016; Czarniawska-Joerges 2006) through a framework for analysing and interpreting paintings. Also, this research encourages a criticism to theory on organisational objectification and a reflection on organisational privacy. In addition to contributions in organisation studies, this research also proposes an understanding of organisational dystopia by addressing its qualities and themes. Furthermore, this study has practical contributions to how work, management, and organisations are taught in higher education, and how academics can use curation as an alternative to publishing and conferences.

1.5 Thesis structure

Following this initial chapter, I address the other parts of this thesis as follows:

Chapter 2 is the literature review. In this chapter I address two of the main components of this thesis: CMS and dystopia. CMS is acknowledged for its critical agenda and encouragement of alternative research methods. In addition, I elaborate on

CMS research that focuses on popular culture so as to demonstrate the connection between CMS and studies of culture. This is important since I position this research in CMS as an avenue to study high art, which is a particular category of culture. Dystopia is a present theme in CMS and organisation studies, however, the specific nature of 'organisational dystopia' is not. For this reason, I draw on the existing literature to evidence what is currently known prior to analysing and interpreting the paintings by Tetsuya Ishida. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a basic knowledge of the concepts and theory that shape the findings of this research.

Chapter 3 is a data chapter on Surrealism. Surrealism is presented in this chapter in two parts. First, Surrealism is overviewed as a movement that started in 1924 in Paris, France by André Breton. The purpose of this is to demonstrate that Surrealist paintings exist as products of organisation, leadership, and ideology. Hence there is a connection in studying Surrealist paintings as outcomes of organisation. Secondly, Surrealism is examined as an art genre. Surrealism is a genre admired for its visual emphasis of contradiction, irrationality, and mystery. By drawing on famous Surrealist painters such as René Magritte and Salvador Dalí in comparison to Tetsuya Ishida, this explains the continuity of Surrealist elements through time. Hence, this chapter provides a necessary background knowledge on Surrealism as a genre of art prior to framing an approach to analysing and interpreting paintings.

Chapter 4 is a methods chapter. I discuss and articulate my framework to examine the contemporary Surrealist paintings by Tetsuya Ishida. The purpose of this framework is to foster an analysis and interpretation that responds to my two research questions on organisational dystopia. In the discipline of art, approaches to analysis and interpretation of a painting are not explicit since there is a fear that the written word limits the visual imagination (Barrett 1994, 2000; Buster and Crawford 2010; Sontag 1964). However, I formulate a method in order to present research that is transparent, verifiable, and robust. This method is not a universal contribution since it is specific to my research questions and Surrealism. Instead, this method is a foundation for future academics to use as they construct their own framework to analyse and interpret paintings in other genres.

Chapter 5 is the first findings chapter. This chapter is curated in response to the first research question: *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* In analysing and interpreting the selected paintings by Ishida, I identify the quality of

objectification. This representation of objectification raises reflection on alienation and despair. In accordance with Townley (1993), mechanisms of human resources, such as interviews and assessment, are represented as practices that objectify workers. In addition, surveillance and control also contribute to alienation. Organisational dystopia represents a criticism to objectification since salarymen are rendered objects of organisational function. Hence, objectification and alienation are a threat to human creativity and improvisation.

Chapter 6 is the second findings chapter. This chapter is curated to answer to the second research question: *What are themes of organisational dystopia?* Following present research on a paradox of dystopia, the chapter addresses whether a salaryman endures or escapes dystopia. After analysing and interpreting the paintings, I interpret themes of escape, such as sleep (inemuri), in which the escape must end by a return to consciousness. There are also themes of enduring dystopia, such as finding refuge in a bathroom or drinking alcohol. These coping mechanisms offer hope in that they are momentary escapes, since the salaryman must return to work. Instead, an alternative to escape and endure is present in the form of suicide: rather than endure or escape to another place, the salaryman leaves this reality all-together. Hence an organisational dystopia is complex and filled with moments of hopefulness and hopelessness. Further, this chapter adds to areas often missed in organisational research, such as the toilet and rooftop, and topics, including alcohol and suicide.

Chapter 7 is the discussion chapter. In recognising the findings from the previous two chapters, I make three arguments. First, I discuss the representation of objectification as a nightmare in which salarymen serve organisational functions at the loss of their humanity. In rendering a person an object, this alienation from humanity is an important contributor to feelings of isolation and despair. Today, there are organisations that attempt to increasingly objectify the worker, like implanted microchips. Thus, what this discussion offers is a warning about progress that is occurring in the present day. Second, I also address the significance of privacy. Privacy is an important aspect of the toilet and rooftop wherein workers can remain anonymous and free to engage with alternative identities, workplace resistance, and be alone. Today, such private spaces are increasingly encroached upon by management, hence this is a threat to privacy in organisations. This is significant as a control of privacy further objectifies workers, and also decreases the possibilities for resistance

and freedom. Third, I address themes of dystopia related to the paradox of dystopia (i.e. endure and escape). In particular, I reflect on suicide and death as part of the interpretive process. I also raise two practical implications for this research. One is the curation of artworks to resist the conformities and structures of publication and conferences. This is so academics can reach new audiences and engage with alternative research topics. Another implication is the use of artworks as part of a critical education. Artworks are a way to access the imagination, therefore students have a silent space to criticise and reflect on work, management, and organisation.

Chapter 8 is a conclusion chapter. I summarise the research and conclude with limitations and opportunities for further research.

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review provides an introduction to the foundations of this thesis: Critical Management Studies (CMS), dystopia, and Surrealism. These areas of research are important in order to set a foundation for bringing humanities into organisation studies (Czarniawska 2016; Czarniawska-Joerges 2006). This thesis is grounded in CMS due to its acceptance for unconventional research designs and established interest in (popular) culture studies (Adler, Forbes and Willmott 2007; Alvesson and Willmott 2003; Brewis and Jack 2009; Carr and Hancock 2003; Fournier and Grey 2000; Parker 2005, 2006, 2017b; Rhodes 2007, 2016; Rhodes and Westwood 2008). Although CMS scholars demonstrate an interest in culture, paintings evade its critical attention. Hence, Surrealist paintings are a contribution to expanding the repertoire of CMS research designs.

Dystopia, as an imaginative place of dark extremes, problematises reality in order to alter the course of reality, including managerial and organisational progress (Jameson 2010; Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007; Snodgrass 1996). There are many themes to dystopia, including environment, technology, bureaucracy, religion, political regimes, and gender (Claeys 2010; Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007; Snodgrass 1996). Of these different dystopias, there is minimal consideration for a specific type of dystopia: organisational. Organisational dystopia is minimally present in organisation studies when alluding to qualities of alienation and loneliness (Marx 1996; Warner 2007) as well as the exclusion or oppression of groups (Pullen, Harding and Phillips 2017; Stokes 2011). Hence organisational dystopia is the specific type of dystopia that is examined in this thesis. This type of dystopia offers a critical reflection specific to organisational life, such as privacy, alienation, and objectification.

In order to examine organisational dystopia, I analyse specific Surrealist paintings by the artist Tetsuya Ishida. Surrealism is of interest because of its history and art. Surrealism is an appropriate area through which to engage CMS and dystopia since Surrealism is an alternative, unconventional source to engage the imagination. Surrealism has rarely been cited in organisational research; those who have argue that it is an important source for investigation (e.g. Carr 2003; Carr and Hancock 2003; Carr and Zanetti 2000; Corbett 2009; Zanetti 2007). The acknowledged contributions

of Surrealism range from its critical estrangement (Carr and Zanetti 2000; Zanetti 2007) to the examination of the relations between opposites or contradictions (Carr 2003). In addition, the influence of Surrealism has been cited as a predecessor of the 'Spirituality at Work' movement (Corbett 2009). This thesis offers further contributions of Surrealism to organisation studies, such as a unique case of organising and organisation, in order to persuade the reader that art is valuable as a source to study organisations.

This chapter has begun to justify the connections between, and interest in, CMS, dystopia, and Surrealism. Prior to going further, it is first necessary to reflect on the question: where is art? It seems that organisation studies has avoided art, although work and organisations have long been sighted in paintings. This first section evidences a cultural value in artistic representations of labour that has been present for centuries.

2.2 Paintings about work

While organisational research has a history of excluding paintings from investigations of work, work itself has long been the subject of investigation by art. People working and people at work are common subjects of paintings. By examining the visual aspects and meaning of a painting, an observer can interpret historical attitudes and values regarding work. And when paintings are brought into comparison through curation, then further analysis can be done about contrasts and developments. In this sense a historicised analysis of art demonstrates changes, shifts, and complexities in relation to eras and events of work over time (e.g. Parker 2017b).

Let us start with the famous painter Vincent van Gogh. Van Gogh was famous for a series of works that featured peasant workers, such as *Peasant Woman Binding Sheaves* (1889, see Image 1). This painting captures the sombre, close-to-nature and difficult work in wheat fields. For instance, the women bends over ('back breaking work'), and as her head draws closer to the wheat, her body is drawn closer to work. Another of his famous paintings, *The Potato Eaters* (1885), depicts a hard-working family sitting around a table eating potatoes. The paintings illustrate the harshness and physicality of daily work. For example, when an observer is in close inspection of the painting, they can see the bony or muscular curvature of the fingers and the darkness of dirt on their hands. Van Gogh, in reference to the latter painting, claimed the

workers “have tilled the earth themselves with these hands they are putting in the dish, and so it speaks of manual labour and - that they have thus honestly earned their food” (Van Gogh Museum 2017). This one interpretation of the paintings of peasant workers concerns morality: peasants who worked hard with their own two hands thus earned their food (Art Gallery New South Wales 1999). Another interpretation is that the peasant series is a critique of the corruption of human labour by machines. In this interpretation, the modernising of machines debases the value of human creation; this interpretation is supported when the peasant series paintings by van Gogh are curated in contrast to the later images of this section.

Image 1. *Peasant Woman Binding Sheaves* (1889)

The reference to realism in *Peasant Woman Binding Sheaves* (1889) is in contrast to the dream-like contradiction in Surrealist paintings (Waldberg 1965). The nature of *Peasant Woman* in terms of its use of colour, line, and shape, retains a sense of reality in that the imagination has not wandered towards irrationality and fantasy (as is the case in Surrealism where one could observe a floating apple). Nevertheless, the boldness of the van Gogh’s choices of colours and shapes contribute to an expressive effect of the painting, one which projects a mood and reflection of its subjects. ‘To eat what they sow’ suggests that the peasants are in charge of their own abilities and

product of labour, in contrast to an industrial proletariat class in which a person only possessed their labour power (Marx 2007). Thus, the industrial labourers did not possess the outputs of their creation. This painting by van Gogh, completed shortly after the death of Karl Marx, suggests an idealism in a way of life that does not conform to the notions of factories and large-scale production. Rather, one can observe that van Gogh depicts a way of hard labour that maintains a moral and human quality, in contrast to the alienation of labour in an industrial setting.

This industrial setting is represented in paintings such as Adolph Menzel's *Iron Rolling Mill* (1872-75), which was painted around the same time as van Gogh's peasant workers. *Iron Rolling Mill* (1872-75) is a representation of large-scale shift work (Facos 2011). The painting depicts the hardships of factory labour as well as the workers who attempt to resist and escape it. For examples, observers can view workers in the glowing light from the iron works as other workers drink in the shadows. Such representations of industrial labour are examples of deviance, resistance, and immorality that are seen in contemporary work environments today (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999). Van Gogh and Menzel, while representing contrasting conditions and types of labour, provide historicised evidence of differentiating work during the Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, when presented and analysed in comparison to each other, these two paintings refer to a period of time in which the values and practices of work are criticised in dualisms of clean/dirty, honesty/deception, hard work/lethargy, purity/impurity, and light/dark.

As industry developed, so did the subject of work in art. Dirty industrial workplaces are captured in paintings by Julian Trevelyan (e.g. *Rubbish May be Shot Here,* 1937) and Roland Vivian Pitchforth (e.g. *Snack Time in a Factory,* 1941). L.S. Lowry's *Industrial Landscape* (1955) depicts smoking chimneys and large factories with workers appearing relatively microscopic in context to their environment. Interestingly, the white background that Lowry's artwork is known for stems from a suggestion by D.B. Taylor, his teacher. Taylor commented that Lowry's earlier paintings of a dark background made it hard to see the figures in the painting; hence Lowry switched to his famous stark white background in order to heighten the visual contrast between the workers and the background (Rohde 2007).

Clive Adams, curator of the exhibit "The Art of White" at The Lowry, UK, remarks the "one of the most harmful associations [is] that of whiteness with

purity" (Sethi 2006). Instead, the colour white is significant in portraying the unknown, such as death, and feelings of loneliness and despair. Hence Lowry's depiction of British industrial work is almost "apocalyptic" (Wullschlager 2013). His focus on dark, large, repetitive buildings and smoking chimneys dominates the painting while belittling (in terms of visual size and communicated importance) the workers heading into the factories. The stark white emphasises loneliness and gloominess in work (Sethi 2006). Interestingly, Lowry was a fan of René Magritte, a famous Surrealist artist (Wullschlager 2013). While Lowry's works refrain from a Surrealist aesthetic, he communicates a dark message on the effects of industrialisation on its labourers.

The paintings by artists Trevelyan, Pitchforth and Lowry showcase the dirty environment of industrial progress. For example, the darkness of chimney soot and grey clouds of pollution. Hence the environment of industry is represented in dark tones. Lowry's paintings presented an "industrial wasteland" (Tate 2004) and Trevelyan's art "caught the mood of the current anti-litter campaigns" (Holman 2009). Hence these earlier paintings are evidence of a criticism in art about work.

Diego Rivera and his *Detroit Industry Murals* (1932-33, see Image 2) is a different representation of industrial labour. His representations of male workers as strong, capable labourers of physical tasks are celebrated for their contribution to mechanical and industrial advancement (Smith 2015). At the time the murals caused controversy since Rivera, a Marxist, was commissioned to make the painting through the support of well-known capitalists, such as Edsel Ford (Smith 1993). Hence, one interpretation of the murals is that they are a 'compromise' between the Marxist intentions of Rivera and the image management of the Ford Motor Company (Smith 1993). While other artists capture the decay of workers, Rivera's portrayal of the tidiness of the assembly line and cleanliness of the men's clothes convey a sense of American idealism. For instance, Rivera's mural depicts men of different races working side-by-side, which is an early commentary on racial equality and unification (Smith 1993), one which is significant to labour relations (Gonyea 2009; Smith 1993). Additionally, in contrast to the previous paintings, there is little to no evidence of misbehaviour or resistance. Thus one can observe that paintings represent different understanding of work. For example, paintings communicate contrasting positions on working conditions as utopian (e.g. Rivera) or dystopian (e.g. Lowry).

Image 2. Section of *Detroit Industry Murals* (1932-33)

After the growth of industry, art depicts the plurality of occupations. The illustrations by Norman Rockwell on the covers of *The Saturday Evening Post* included a female schoolteacher in *Happy Birthday, Miss Jones* (1956, see Image 3), a male optometrist in *At the Optometrist* (1956), and a man repairing a stained glass church window in *Repairing Stained Glass* (1960). These are examples from Rockwell's extensive oeuvre that depict diversity in the workforce at a time when the American middle class was growing. Rockwell's illustrations reveal his personal aesthetic style of cleanliness, idealism, and innocence in the developing American labour market (Halpern 2006). In addition, the illustrations are a biased perspective since they were commissioned by *The Post.* that are embedded in the aims of production and profitability of *The Post.* For these reasons, Rockwell's illustrations represent an idealism and innocence in the American labour market (Halpern 2006).

The nostalgic quality to Rockwell's images portray an ideal workplace in contrast to real experience. This is due to Rockwell's intent to create an image in which the objects and subjects within it "always [appear] a little nicer than it was in real life" (*The Saturday Evening Post* 1977:10). Due to this, analysing Rockwell's paintings offer an idealism to the simplicity and happiness to the way things were (Finch 1979). Hence Rockwell's paintings communicate an idealism of the era and also shape the historical sense of what work was like back then.

Image 3. *Happy Birthday, Miss Jones* (1956)

This brief analysis of selected paintings evidences that work is a continued subject of art. Hence, paintings are a temporal and contextual source of information about work, including its darkness through shadows, grime, and deception. Furthermore, these paintings are part of different aesthetic movements, which means that there are a variety of genres that have work as a subject for representation. As a result, there exists great potential in examining paintings for other research questions or criticisms in order to progress art and organisation studies as a distinct interdisciplinary field of research.

The contemporary Surrealist paintings by Tetsuya Ishida are likewise evidence for investigating work and organisations. The artworks selected in this thesis are chosen due to the representation of Japanese salarymen and dystopia. These paintings were completed in the 1990s, when Japan was suffering an economic downturn and rapidly changing technologies (Horikiri 2010). As part of Japanese culture, Ishida's paintings observe the 'salaryman', who is a white-collar male worker who embodies "both Japanese masculinity and Japanese corporate culture" (Dasgupta 2000:2). In this sense, salarymen are built from education and then transitioned into work, wherein they are produced into the ideal worker (Thomas 2013). Today, these salarymen are a

governmental and social concern, due to the rise in 'karoshi': work-related death or suicide by overwork and stress (Fifield 2016; Kawanishi 2008).

The image of the Japanese salaryman is multifaceted. Hence, it is important to note that the paintings of salarymen depicted in Ishida's art are one version of the salarymen depicted in culture. In the 1950s and 1960s, the salaryman was an ideal image in society: a man who exhibits the traits of masculinity and corporate success (Dasgupta 2013). Salarymen were a central figure in Japanese films in the 1950s and 1960s, such as in *Oban* ("Boss"; 1957) that had three additional follow-up films, and the film series *Shachō* ("Company President") that had multiple films set for release from 1956 to 1971 by Toho Studios (Galbraith 2008). In these films, salarymen were depicted in physical comedy, which bolstered social opinion of salarymen as loyal and happy (Barrett 1989).

As new mediums of culture rose in popularity, the characterisation of salarymen diverged. Skinner (1979) assessed the representation of salarymen in over 1500 comic strips published from 1974 to 1976. In his investigation, the often satirical depictions of salarymen draw attention to relatable themes: worries about career and relationships with colleagues and managers, and also a dissatisfaction with life (Skinner 1979). This is in contrast to "much of the literature on Japanese work organisations [that] presents a picture of the salaried employee as basically contented with his lot in life" (Skinner 1979:148). The identification of contrast in the identities of Japanese salarymen is an important basis for giving voice to alternative experiences of organisational life.

In contrast to Skinner's study in the 1970s, Matanle, McCann and Ashmore (2008) also identify a representation of the salaryman as an everyday hero. Matanle, McCann and Ashmore (2008) look at two representations of salarymen in manga: the cool, sophisticated Shima Kōsaku and Yakima Kintarō, who "inspires" readers with his integrity and masculinity (p. 659). The former character has appeared in comics since 1983, while the latter protagonist ran as a manga in 1994 - 2002 and has since returned to print (Kinsella 2013; Matanle, McCann and Ashmore 2008).

Salaryman manga is a distinct genre aimed at working adults (Kinsella 2013). The genre is more realistic than others given that the depiction of salarymen was seen to be an imaginative extension of real lives (Ishikawa 2007). For instance, salarymen manga often depicts the experiences of the series editors, writers, and artists at white-

collar work (Kinsella 2013). Given the general changes in the depiction of salarymen in culture, there is a sense that the identity of the salaryman is increasingly disenchanted in that real salarymen consume the ideal heroics of illustrated salarymen.

Hidaka's (2010) generational study of salarymen notes the continuity and also alterations to the masculinity of salarymen given societal changes. For example, Hidaka (2010) claims, "The significance of work is revealed through the lens of '*ikigai*' (that which makes life worth living)…While most participants across the three cohorts [generations] suggested that '*kigyōsenshi*' or corporate warrior was an antiquated dedication to work, many were unsuccessful in identifying an *ikigai* other than work. Indeed while some participants claimed that their *ikigai* was family, their participation in childcare and child-rearing…was minimal" (p. 137). In other words, the dependence on the corporation as a source of identity is a constant throughout the generations of salarymen; however, the extent to which salarymen are organisation-centric is decreasing, at least slightly, given alterations to societal norms such as an importance of family. In addition, Hidaka (2010) notes the awareness of homosexuality, in contrast to the 'straightness' of salarymen, is an addition to the salaryman identity in contemporary society. Thus, Hidaka's (2010) analysis points to subtle changes in the salaryman identity, though there is no outright transformation to this masculine identity. This suggests that interpreting Ishida's paintings, completed in the 1990s, are relevant today given the consistency to the salaryman identity. Hence, Ishida's work may speak to a present generation of salarymen, as well as to those of the past and future.

While not central to Hidaka's (2010) research, the descriptions of the 1990s and salarymen are interesting in relation to Ishida's paintings. Hidaka (2010) notes that Japan suffered an economic bubble in the early 1990s, which resulted in a period known as the 'Lost Decade.' During this recession, salarymen did not have the stability of a permanent job, and thus could not depend on the organisation. This had an impact on the self-image of salarymen, who were no longer assured of their 'breadwinner' status (Hidaka 2010). This Lost Decade also had an effect on the young university graduates who could not transition into work; hence, young men, just like Ishida who was in his 20s during this time period, felt increasingly lost and isolated (Hidaka 2010; Horikiri 2010).

Today, corporate scandals and globalisation have led to a turn in attitudes towards salarymen. Lewis (2016) summarises, "For many decades after the second world war, the white collar salaryman was a glorious, indefatigable, all-conquering economic hero…Men wanted to be him; women wanted to marry him…But in 2016, the salaryman - unassertive, allergic to risk and with a growing list of corporate debacles to his name - has switched." Lewis (2016) presents the argument that qualities of creativity, innovation, and originality are held in high-esteem in contrast to the image of salaryman as an obeying, tired worker. As a result, the identity of the salaryman is argued to be one of the factors hindering the investment, development, and growth of Japan's economy and industry (Lewis 2016).

While the consequences of the salaryman identity to the wider Japanese society are interesting to consider, the depth to the 1990s depictions of salarymen by Ishida present a specific idea to the experience of salarymen at a point in time. It's important to note that within the studies of salarymen, Ishida's paintings are one particular representation and medium. In Ishida's art, there is a noticeable characterisation of salarymen as depressed, lonely and isolated in an organisational dystopia.

In Chapters 5 and 6, the paintings of Ishida are analysed and interpreted as critiques of working life. Through a dystopian lens, my analysis and interpretation raise criticism to workplace objectification, totalitarian control over space (including sites of privacy), and escape from dystopia, whether into dreams, alcohol, or suicide. In these paintings, Ishida captures the despair and hopelessness of the salaryman. Hence, when assessed through the lens of specific knowledges and practices, Ishida's paintings are important images to visualise and reflect on the negatives of work specific to the "industrial samurai" (Thomas 2013:129).

In summary, paintings are a way forward for organisation studies. Paintings, with their variety of content, and thus are significant to observing multiple perspectives and experiences about work at different times and places. Paintings and organisation studies are a new stream of interdisciplinary research that can amplify a field of inquiry that is historical, cultural, alternative, and critical.

2.3 Critical Management Studies (CMS)

CMS emerged in the 1990s as an academic discipline to challenge and suggest alternatives to the dominant theory and practices of organising and management

(Adler, Forbes and Willmott 2007; Fournier and Grey 2000; Parker 2002a). As Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott (2009) state, CMS is concerned "with the study *of*, and sometimes *against,* management rather than with the development of techniques or legitimations *for* management" (p. 1; Parker 2002a). Hence, CMS does not necessarily offer a perspective for undermining management and organisations; rather CMS is a critical stance to challenge enduring assumptions, values, behaviours, and narratives surrounding management and organisations. The purpose of challenging hegemonic and assumptive knowledge about management and organisations is to free and emancipate workers, managers, and others, from a constrained scope of action and possibility (Alvesson and Willmott 1992).

Given the critical nature of CMS, academics have debated whether the aims and practices of CMS originate in a utopian or dystopian (non)idealism. Spicer, Alvesson, and Kärreman (2009) argue that CMS is utopian in which "the world of management [as] a violent and unending catastrophe of repression, dependence, humiliation and pain…can be resolved or mitigated" (p. 551). Hence CMS has a utopian aim to resolve the darkness of current management and organisational knowledge and practice. Other academics, such as Klikauer (2005), argue that "CMS has banished utopia" since the utopia for one individual or group is not a utopia for another individual or group (p. 213). Hence it is contradictory that CMS can claim a utopian agenda. Instead, CMS can raise critique to management so that management practices can become better, though for who and at what consequence are unsettled disagreements. The lack of a conclusive utopian or dystopian assumption in CMS presents an openness to identify chaos, complexity and contradiction of work and organisation, whether to rectify or appreciate managerial error.

From another angle of interest, there is an identifiable tone to CMS research that addresses a dark side to working life (e.g. Parker 2002b, 2005; Parker et. al. 1999; Rhodes 2004, 2007). As Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott (2009:8) argue:

> CMS contends that contemporary organisations and forms of organising have many negative implications…instead of enabling human flourishing, organisations incubate and normalise stress and bad health, naturalise subordination and exploitation, demand conformism, inhibit free

communication, erode morality, create and reinforce ethic and gender inequalities, and so on.

This thesis follows this approach by addressing a darkness and nightmarish quality to work, management, and organisation. As Parker (2006) writes, "negative representations of the world of organisations are actually very common indeed, even if we usually overlook them" (p. 4). Therefore, this thesis examines an overlooked area of darkness: organisational dystopia in Surrealist paintings.

Dystopia is a fitting concept to study in CMS. The notion of dystopia, as is the case with many CMS scholars, "rejects the idea that man can reach perfection" (Vieira 2010:17). Hence progress and development are denaturalised as positive aspects about work when using a dystopian perspective since dystopian criticisms often present how 'attaining perfection' can go awry and for whom (Vieira 2010). The criticisms raised in a dystopia is due to the imaginative exaggeration of the negatives of work in order to identify real flaws and struggles (Claeys 2010). While some dystopias offer a plan to reverse the dystopia, others rely on the imagination of its readers or viewers to create a solution (Sambell 2003).

Dystopia is not a new framework in CMS and organisational literature. This imaginative space in which to examine the nightmare of work and management has been included in the publications of scholars like Martin Parker and Carl Rhodes. Parker (2005) reflects on Gothicism as metaphors of monsters as evidence of the extreme exercises of managerial domination: Dracula's who suck the life out of workers; and Frankenstein's who take pride in controlling life itself. Dystopia is also present in Rhodes' (2007) analysis of rock music as a depiction of contrasting utopian and dystopian visions of work: "In a managerialist vision, organisations might be imagined in a utopian state of order and purity, but for the rocker that state can also be a source of alienation and despair - a situation where work is something to be at best escaped or at worst endured" (p. 43). Rhodes' (2007) analysis is significant in conceptualising dystopia for two reasons. First, Rhodes (2007) communicates that a utopia for one person may be a dystopia for another person; hence claims of utopia and dystopia are a matter of position and perspective. Second, Rhodes (2007) indicates that, unlike the plan of attaining utopia, a dystopia is a state to escape or endure. This

refers to the paradox of dystopia: a dystopia is qualified by hopelessness of no escape (endure) or hopefulness of escape (Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007).

One of the reasons why dystopia and paintings fit with the field of CMS is because this area allows for non-orthodox research (Alvesson and Willmott 2003). The freedom for alternative research designs and sources is due to a plurality of analytical frameworks, including feminism, critical theory, Marxism, and Foucault, to name but a few (Brewis and Jack 2009; Fournier and Grey 2000) that are situated in CMS. In addition to the different types of culture studies (Brewis and Jack 2009). The plethora of analytical frames and multiplicity in research designs is attractive for discussing an under-studied and imaginative-based concept like 'organisational dystopia' as it appears in paintings.

Given the complexity of CMS as a field, I now overview different theoretical positions in order to situate the theoretical underpinning of this research on dystopia. A feminist position to research addresses gender inequalities. In organisational research, feminist scholars 'confront', 'explore', and 'question' how differences in being a woman or a man impact and direct power relations and knowledge construction (Calás and Smircich 2009; Pullen, Harding and Phillips 2017). Such vantage points have inspired dystopian literature, such as *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood or *The Stepford Wives* by Ira Levin. Both novels caution against the hierarchical supremacy of men in organised society about the casting of objectified women as property. Feminism, in confronting gender equality, does not depict a 'rosy' picture of work and academia (Sang and Glasgow 2017). In maintaining coherency throughout this thesis, feminism is not taken as a theoretical position. But is is acknowledged that Surrealism is problematic in that it has a history of devaluing women both as artists and as subjects of Surrealist art (e.g. Caws 1986; Chadwick 1998; Zanetti 2007). Further, the focus on Japanese salarymen silences other genders present in the paintings by Tetsuya Ishida. Hence, I include the feminist position here to acknowledge that future research on organisational dystopia would benefit from a feminist perspective.

Critical theory, which has its origins in the Frankfurt School, is a broad area of criticism that "includes all work taking a basically critical or radical stance on contemporary society with an orientation toward investigating exploitation, repression, unfairness, asymmetrical power relations (generated from class, gender, race or position), distorted communication and false consciousness" (Alvesson and Deetz

2006:256). Critical theorists generally regard consumption and communication, for example, as processes that structure rationalities and logics that determine social conditions (Grey and Willmott 2005). Consumption of mass media that communicate hegemonic ideas of a conformed life is an issue raised in *Wall-E,* a dystopian children's film in which humans inhabit the spacecraft *Axiom*. On the ship, passengers live a material life of gluttony, impersonality, and consumption by the hegemonic corporation Buy-N-Large. As a result, all persons are fat and wearing the same coloured jumpsuits, sitting in their moving chairs, and chatting or shopping through their personal screens. Critical theory is one route in which CMS scholars have positioned analysis of popular culture (e.g. Carr 2003; Hancock and Tyler 2004; Rhodes and Parker 2008). Critical theory has a presence within this thesis, though it is not the main theoretical position. Rather this thesis acknowledges that it is part of a group that addresses criticism about management and organisations through a culture medium.

In a general sense, Marxism holds that organisations are structures of commodity production. It is in this process that workers are alienated from their own 'labour power', since they must sell their abilities, and thus the control of the product, in order to earn a wage to survive in society (Marx 1996, 2007; Wallimann 1981). Marx also argues that a capitalist society is based on its class structure, in which workers (the proletariat) are in crisis with the owners (the bourgeoisie) due to labour alienation (Adler, Forbes and Willmott 2007). Marx adopts a dystopian perspective on the labour conditions in hopes this will lead to a social revolution to upend the commodification of proletariat power and the class structures of production and control. Thereby eliminating the alienation of labour. This is a brief understanding of a Marxist position, though it is an important connection to this thesis since class issues are often a feature in dystopian representations. For instance, the film *Snowpiercer* shows workers who live in rotten conditions at the back of the train. In order to move up in society, and access better conditions of life (e.g. food and warmth), they must make their way to the front of the train where the elite live. In the film *Elysium,* Earth's inhabitants live in poverty while a select few (the rich and powerful) live on Elysium, which has the unique technology to cure all disease. However, this technology is limited to the inhabitants of Elysium, so in order for the poor of Earth to access it, they must overtake Elysium. Hence class-based crises is a theme present in a

dystopia. Class-based criticism is also a part of this examination of Japanese salarymen, who are a men of a particular class. Structured under the corporate presidents and above the blue-collar workers, Japanese salarymen are a unique class of white-collar male workers. Given the connection between Marx's theory of alienation to organisational dystopia, this thesis takes inspiration from Marx without conforming specifically to this position. This is to retain a freedom of interpretation to account for qualities and themes of dystopia that are not readily discussed in Marxist texts.

Foucault's work on power relations, discourse and knowledge have had a strong influence on organisation studies and CMS (e.g. Grey and Willmott 2005; McKinlay and Starkey 1998). Foucault's analysis of the mechanisms and technologies of power and discipline provide an alternative way of examining organisations that focus on a person as a 'subject' (Townley 1993). Discussing the power and abilities of a subject is one of the ways to separate a Marxist position from a Foucauldian one: a Marxist position focuses on knowledge (ideology) as a condition of power, while Foucault suggests that power is the precursor to knowledge (Barratt 2003). Thus, it is through power that categories and classifications are exercised on the worker (subject), which render the person an object of knowledge to be managed and controlled (Townley 1993). Or, as seen in the extreme of organisational dystopia, the extent of subjugation as exploitation and abuse. Using one's power to categorise individuals is a basis for dystopian novels such as *Divergent.* In *Divergent,* categories, like Dauntless or Abnegation, classify types of persons according to their values and skills. When individuals do not conform to a specific category, they are labelled Divergent, which is a threat to the structure of identity typologies. Hence a divergent is a threat to the system and the system's mechanisms of control (e.g. serums). Thus divergent are important figures to resist the system of categories. Categories for people are a means to control individuals, and the theme of control is carried in many dystopias, such as organisational dystopia discussed in this thesis. Therefore, this research takes a sensitivity to a Foucauldian position without adhering solely to it, so as to remain flexible to the interpretation of Ishida's works.

In sum, this thesis does not position itself within one theory. Instead, this research takes a sensitivity to critical theory, Marx, and Foucault given the multiplicity in interpreting paintings. Therefore, this thesis is able to account for the variety of visual elements and meanings.

My reason for drawing inspiration from critical theory, Marx and Foucault without adopting one (and only one) position throughout this thesis is because I refer to these positions in my analysis and interpretation of organisational dystopia. For example, Foucault's objectification and Marx's alienation are both visible features in paintings by Ishida (e.g. *Conveyor-belt People,* 1996). Hence, rather than treat objectification and alienation as silent aspects of organisational life, I take them into account as notable qualities of organisational dystopia. Thus, this research on organisational dystopia possesses a sensitivity to different types of literature and critical positions, since dystopia is a complex and contradictory site of the imagination (Manguel 2003; Parker 2002b; Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007; Zamyatin 1922).

Having a sensitivity to these theoretical positions is part of the plurality in CMS scholarship (Fournier and Grey 2000). Underlying the sensitivity to these critical positions is an awareness of social construction. Social constructionism suggests reality is structured by taken-for-granted interactions, norms, rationalities and knowledge (Berger and Luckmann 1991). Such constructions can have a negative impact, such as gender inequality, exploitation and abuse, alienation and identity. In addition, while these philosophers may not have rendered themselves postmodern, I do embrace the sensitivity of a postmodern position in addressing the artworks by Ishida. This is because I claim there can be multiple possible interpretations to a painting given differences to framework design of interpretation (see Chapter 4). A postmodern sensitivity is fitting to CMS as part of its critical tradition of "challenging the status quo and supporting silenced or marginalised voices" (Alvesson and Deetz 2006:257; Butler 2002).

Before turning to a specific area within CMS that inspired this research, I would like to point out that CMS is not only a strategy for research: CMS is also about teaching (Alvesson and Willmott 2003; Contu 2009). By addressing conflicting experiences of work, including aspects of organisational life that are disregarded for their invisibility or marginalisation, CMS acknowledges the diversity, complexity, ambiguity and contradictions of work and organisations. In addressing this motive in education, there exists a hope that such endeavours may offer students a way of informing themselves about the constraints, structures, limitations and alternatives surrounding organisations. Hence, Critical Management Education (CME) is one area that this research contributes to since paintings are a way to address the imagination

and alternative experiences of organisational life. Paintings are a way for students to silently estrange from reality so as to critique and reflect on their knowledge of organisations and their experiences of work (see Chapter 7).

2.3.1 CMS and popular culture

Rooted in the works of organisational scholars such as Carr, Czarniawska, Hancock, Parker, and Rhodes, this thesis aims to promote interdisciplinary research for organisation studies. While these authors do not represent the entirety of CMS, and while not all these authors regard themselves as CMS scholars, they nevertheless situate themselves as researchers of cultural representations of organisations. These cultural forms include, but are not limited to, literature, music, film and television. Hence, these scholars open up a stream of academia to examine the unusual, the surreal and the alternative.

CMS is a field for culture enthusiasts to explore popular culture as sources of organisational criticism (Brewis and Jack 2009). Since the 2000s, organisational research has examined popular cultural representations of work, management and organisations (Parker 2017b). Since then, there has been a range of cultural sources that have been examined for their representations, including: portrayals of women in soap operas (Czarniawska, Eriksson-Zetterquist and Renmark 2011), gender in detective fiction (Czarniawska 1999), utopia and dystopia in the music of Bruce Springsteen (Rhodes 2004), alternative visions of entrepreneurship in hip-hop music (Skòld and Rehn 2007), metaphors of work in gothic literature (Parker 2005), television shows such as *The Simpsons* (Rhodes and Parker 2008), other cartoons such as *Dilbert* (Doherty 2011), and science fiction (Parker et. al. 1999). Popular culture was also a theme of Rhodes and Westwood's (2008) collection *Critical Representations of Work and Organisation in Popular Culture.*

More recent studies recognise that research interests in culture forms that represent organisational life are "still valid" research connections (Rhodes 2016:135). For example, an episode of *Futurama* called "Raging Bender" represents a cultural and organisational gender struggle (Pullen and Rhodes 2012). In one example, Bender, the protagonist, enters the Ultimate Fighting Robot League as 'Bender the Offender.' This parody of machismo is later altered as Bender adopts his new persona, 'The

Gender Bender', when his popularity starts to wane. Pullen and Rhodes (2012) point out, as a cultural parody, Bender exemplifies how gender categories are refashioned and remade, since gender can be a political game of imitation: he becomes a caricature of a woman when he is 'The Gender Bender.' The television show represents gender issues visible in organisations, and it is the parody of gender that criticises dominant masculine performance (Pullen and Rhodes 2012).

Parker's (2017b) historicised reading of James Bond focuses on "changes and fractures in understandings of work and authority" (p. 2). Over time, Bond has strayed from his earlier literary incarnation as a man who is loyal and committed to his organisation; this is in stark contrast to his contemporary depiction in film as a spy gone rogue who actively subverts M and the organisation. "It seems to me," Parker (2017b) argues, "that if we want to understand any cultural text, we need to situate it within particular moments of production and reception. If we try to set aside the technological differences between novels and films, then it becomes clear in the texts themselves that the meaning of Bond has changed, and likely that it will continue to change" (p. 10).

The studies cited here focus on popular cultural representations of work and organisations. Popular culture is a category that describes cultural products that are produced for mainstream consumption, mass production and standardisation (Rhodes and Parker 2008). Popular culture matters since "organisations also exist as experienced representations" (Rhodes and Westwood 2008:4). Furthermore, those representations shape and enforce how work, management and organisation are experienced and perceived (Brewis and Jack 2009). Additionally, Rhodes (2007) claims there is a 'critique in culture' in which representations "offer critical insight into society and culture" (p. 35). Hence, popular culture is part of the critical agenda of CMS.

Two recent quotes by Rhodes and Parker emphasise the value of popular culture to research:

> Such studies read popular culture in a favourable light, considering the possibility that it provides a mode of knowledge and expression that is different, and value-adding, to more conventional academic knowledge. This value resides in the ways that cultural knowledge both serves to and

> can be used to interrogate and problematise taken-for-granted realities, so as to provide a more engaged and critical appreciation of them. (Rhodes 2016:129)

> …..as if culture had very little to say about the sorts of lives that people actually live in organisations. I don't agree. I think that we can learn much from popular books and popular culture generally… (Parker 2017b:10)

Both authors claim that popular culture provides knowledge about work, management and organisations that is not extracted from traditional methods in social sciences (Parker 2014). Popular culture, in its variety of forms and genres, features multiple different representations of work, just as there is a plurality to experiences, identities, and structures in real organisational life. Similarly, it was previously discussed that paintings also feature various different representations of work (see earlier in chapter). Addressing popular culture is a means of escaping a "neglect of the visual within studies of organisations" and "highly particularised and containerised senses of what organisations are" (Parker 2014:380).

Visual representations of organisations have a future and legitimacy in organisation studies (Bell, Warren and Schroeder 2014). One area that seems to be absent in organisational scholarship on culture is high art, such as painting. High art is difficult to classify. As Beyes (2016) argues, "The expansion of the field of art, the corresponding dissolution of conventional forms of art practices and the proliferation of artistic experiments…make it progressively harder to clearly demarcate the boundaries of art" (p. 123). High art is frequently defined by what it is not: popular culture. High art is often socially constructed due to the placement of 'high art' in museums and galleries, which are socially recognised spaces of valuable cultural products (Freeland 2001). Hence 'high art' is often demarcated from 'low art' or popular culture since it is revered as higher cultural value (Roholt 2013). However, the question of who decides what constitutes high art and how this judgement occurs is unclear. Since owners of art have historically transitioned alongside the development of economies and capitalism. For example, early owners of high art tended to be royalty or rich families who acted as patrons; today, high art can be collected by a

range of individuals, from high to middle class, as part of a private collection or an investment (Freeland 2001; Roholt 2013).

One of the reasons for engaging with high art is that its mediums of communication are different from the television and film of popular culture (e.g. Cohen, Hancock, and Tyler 2006). Painting is a particular culture form of high art (Freeland 2001; Roholt 2013). Since paintings are high art, they are embedded in different processes of creation. Due to this, 'how we see' and 'what we see' when observing a painting is different from the interactions of viewing popular culture. Therefore, a painting is an alternative way of communicating representations of work, management and organisations. Hence paintings are a means for organisational scholars to reassess and revise established concepts and values of organising (Beyes 2016).

Following this line of inquiry, this thesis argues that paintings are a way forward for CMS and organisation studies. Paintings are a material form to observe the imagination outside of its hidden realm of the mind. In this way, paintings are a way to criticise and attend to organisational objectification, privacy and escape (see Chapter 7). Hence, this research is part of a larger agenda to persuade organisational scholars that paintings are legitimate sources to explore work, management and organisations.

Overall, the flexibility and freedom to consider alternative and new research designs and data are reasons for positioning this research in CMS. In doing so, this research aims to grow interdisciplinary study of paintings and organisations. Dystopia has a presence in CMS, although in the wider field of literature and utopian and dystopian studies there are important details to consider. For this reason I turn to dystopia in the following section.

2.4 On dystopia

The concept of dystopia existed prior to CMS. First coined by John Stuart Mill in 1869 (Mill 1988), 'dystopia' was conceived as an imaginary site in which the 'worst of the worst' flourishes. It developed as the opposite of utopia, or the visionary ideal, in order to unseat heavenly notions of progress and advancement (Fitting 2010; Vieira 2010).

Dystopia struggles as a general concept due to its ambiguity and shifting response to the changes in social life. Hence there is a diversity to the representation

of dystopia in stories, films and art. Due to the plethora of dystopian representations, it is difficult to pin down a specific, universal definition of dystopia. For instance, Zamyatin (1922) describes dystopia as a mathematical "– sign" in contrast to utopia's "+ sign" (p. 286), while Manguel (2003) defines dystopia as a "shadow image" of a "place that allows our worst qualities to bloom unhampered" (p. 53). The shift from mathematical signs to verbal definitions represents a noticeable temporal and cultural repositioning of the understanding of dystopia.

Interest in dystopia has been growing since the early 1900s, and dystopia has become a dominant cultural theme in literature and film (Hillegas 1967; Vieira 2010). Reasons for this include growing scepticism and increased awareness of world issues. For instance, a variety of literary dystopias exist that have responded to conflicts and struggles over the environment, technology, globalisation, and politics, to name a few (Claeys 2010; Hillegas 1967; Hughes 2003; Stableford 2010; Vieira 2010).

Management and organisations are one area that dystopia recognised throughout the twentieth century. One type is the 'bureaucratic dystopia' in which regulations, discipline and control reach the extremes of domination. The film *Brazil* explores the dullness of paperwork and red tape in black and white, in stark contrast to the bright colours of lust and romance, when the protagonist Sam meets his dream woman.

Another type is 'corporate dystopia', which represents a totalisation of society by the corporation. The dystopian comic series *American Flagg!* exposes the totalitarian control of Plex, a corporation that dominates both politics and labour, and leeches off its workers in a continuous cycle of work and consumption in a secret plan to sell off the United States of America to the highest bidder. In the film *The Lego Movie,* the main protagonist Emmet resists Lord Business, whose company Octan dominates the market and thus subsequently manages to control a completely conformist society in identity and way of life ('Everything is Awesome').

The two types of business-based dystopias are in contrast to organisational dystopia. While a bureaucratic dystopia focuses its critique on the system of bureaucracy, the corporate dystopia finds fault with the greed and stretch of corporations. In contrast, the organisational dystopia critiques the dehumanisation of labour.

Besides these three types of dystopia, there is also a presence in literature to critique scientific management. The novel *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin depicts a world dominated by scientific management. Frederick Taylor is a cult-like deity who brought purity through time, order and precision at the cost of relationships, emotions and individual identity. The different mediums of dystopian representation, ranging from films to comics and to novels, point to diverse modes of communication in exploring criticisms of reality.

The diversity of dystopian representations is due to the difference of timely, contextual communications in response to social, political and organisational issues and suffering. Besides relying on the changing conditions of society as a reason for different dystopian representations, one must also consider the differences of individual imagination. Dystopias can vary even when addressing the same issue since they are products of a particular "one vision" of its artist or creator (Bonnett 2004:131). This limits the generalisation of a dystopia, yet offers a way to address creative intention. When addressing the dystopia as an extension of the individual mind, a reader or observer can reflect on the personal condition of the creator. This is a way to address voices and experiences that may have previously been silenced in research.

A dystopia estranges from reality in order to warn readers or viewers. This estrangement is produced through cognitive distancing and aesthetic abstraction (Claeys 2010; Gordin, Tilley and Prakash 2010). The meeting of the familiar and unfamiliar produces a shock in order to evaluate the world (Carr and Hancock 2003). The struggle in being 'just enough' familiar and unfamiliar surroundings in a dystopia is an important balance of artistic representation. In the paintings addressed in this thesis, the meeting of reality and imagination is 'surreality' (Breton 1924).

The two research questions of this thesis are about organisational dystopia. The two research questions are: *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* and *What are themes of organisational dystopia?* The following two subsections provide a foundation to answering each question with an analysis and interpretation of contemporary Surrealist paintings by Tetsuya Ishida.

2.4.1 Qualities of dystopia

A dystopia is built on struggle. In *Brave New World,* the Savage's passion and love clash with the soma-fuelled complacency of the citizens of World State. In *We,* the female character O-90's desire to conceive and give birth to a child is an act forbidden by One State. The protagonist Winston in *1984* struggles to conceal his romance with Julia from the totalitarian surveillance and Thought Police of Oceania and Big Brother. The contrast between emotion and indifference in *Brave New World,* mother and worker in *We,* and individual freedom and group conformity are examples of struggles presented in dystopian literature.

Present within these struggles is identity. From resisting conformity to embracing alternative identities, identity is a theme that also resonates in CMS. "The politics of identity and identity representation is the deepest and most suppressed struggle in the workplace and, hence, the 'site' where domination and responsive agency are the most difficult to unravel" (Deetz 2003:27). For this reason, struggles around identity is an area to examine when addressing qualities of organisational dystopia. Domination is as an extensive exercise of power; in a dystopia the domination may be so extreme that the 'responsive agency' is silence or nonverbal communication. Hence it is important to consider identity struggles as they are portrayed in paintings.

In sensitivity to Foucault, identity is relevant to a discussion of the subject. According to Foucault (1982), power is a means of disciplining and controlling subjects. A 'subject' is an individual "subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (Foucault 1982:781). Therefore the identity of a subject is tied to power. Hence, when examining dystopia, one may observe the extreme in which the subject is powerless. Also, when speaking of organisational dystopia, this refers to a particular kind of subject: the worker as "a force of production" (Foucault 1995:26).

As previously mentioned, this thesis is not Foucauldian. Yet, this literature recognises that Foucault's texts influence CMS scholars in devising a knowledge of organisational dystopia. For example, Knights and Willmott (1989) assert, "Subjectivity is understood as a product of disciplinary mechanisms, techniques of surveillance and power-knowledge strategies: human freedom is constituted through their mediation of subjectivity. Through processes of individualisation, the activation

of autonomy is seen to become preoccupied with disciplining the self in ways that secure the recognition and confirmation of significant others" (p. 554). Given the connection between Foucault and CMS scholarship, particularly of research on a dark side to organisations, this thesis examines the quality of the subject in organisational dystopia.

Subjugation is an empirical phenomenon that academics have theorised about and studied. However, they have yet to explore what lies beyond subjugation. One pursuit beyond subjugation is objectification, which is the way in which a human being is perceived or treated as an object (Nussbaum 1995). Objectification has been researched in fields such as gender and culture (Nussbaum 1995). Objectification has yet to be taken with the same seriousness in organisation studies. One of the reasons for this is the fantastical quality of objectification. For example, Grant and Shields (2010) argue, "The objectification *ideal* is a perpetual aspiration that management is predestined to pursue" (p. 71). As an ideal, objectification is not assessed as a real consequence of surveillance, domination, control, or discipline. "Labour objectification is an employer aspiration, not an accomplished reality" (Grant and Shields 2010:63). Since empirical research is limited to reality, paintings are a way to imagine what lies beyond subjugation: objectification.

This quality of objectification in organisational dystopia is identified in this thesis. Objectification is assessed as a shift from a subject as having a 'force' to the consequence of an object serving a 'function' in the paintings by Ishida (Xamou Art 2012). Analysing Ishida's paintings as evidence of objectification as a quality of organisational dystopia adds to the criticism of subjugation raised by Deetz (2003), Grant and Shields (2010), and Knights and Willmott (1989).

Surveillance is another quality of dystopia that has been influenced by Foucault (1995), whose theory of the panopticon is a site in which "he is seen, but does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject of communication" (p. 225). This "perverse dream" is a way of controlling and dominating a subject, such as an organisational worker (Foucault 1995:225). Contemporary organisational research points to technological means of surveillance, from computer programs to identity cards and smart watches, as ways of accounting for the individual and to render the person a non-subject (i.e. object of knowledge). The paintings by Ishida point to the synopticon, an alternative type of surveillance in contrast to the panopticon.

Surveillance diminishes the possibilities for resistance, freedom, and privacy. Clegg and Courpasson (2007) declare, “The loop between being, doing and becoming tightens irrevocably on the terms of those elites that can channel and funnel information, closing down the unaccountable moments in the programmed loop between employees and technologies reporting data that managers have to act on” (p. 134). As the ‘unaccountable' is made ‘accountable' by surveillance, the ‘white space’ of resistance, freedom, and privacy grow smaller under surveillance (O’Doherty et. al. 2013). Since surveillance renders a subject increasingly “classifiable, measurable and, hence, more manipulatable” (Grant and Shields 2010: 64).

Surveillance is a vital phenomenon to address when discussing the qualities of organisational dystopia. Since surveillance is criticised as a totalitarian attempt to render management all-knowing of its workers. Extreme surveillance of the mental and corporeal aspects of workers reduces their subjectivity to objectivity (Nussbaum 1995), and turns a group into a population (Foucault 2007; Townley 1993). Besides discussing extreme surveillance, it is also important to discuss the boundaries of acceptable surveillance. For example, an interpretation of Ishida’s paintings presents the distressing fear of management encroaching on bathroom privacy.

Private space such as the toilet is important to the protection and dignity of the self. When organisations and managers restrict the freedom to use the toilet, this control over personal privacy can be regarded as a dystopian quality. This is because toilets, an unattended site in organisation studies, are more than a site for employees and non-employees to relieve themselves; bathrooms are also a site to freely engage in communication and resistance while escaping the managerial gaze (Haslam 2012; Molotch and Norén 2010). When organisations and management observe and surveil when, how long, and for what purpose a worker is in the toilet, this invasion into a private ‘time out’ and ‘away from’ work feeds into the struggles, anxiety and despair of dystopia (Haslam 2012).

In discussing identity, I have shared my sensitivity to Foucault’s notion of a subject. As this thesis is also sensitive to Marx, another dystopian quality of identity is alienation. The notion of alienation has been attributed to Marx (2007[1844]), who wrote that it exists when a person is ‘alienated’ from their own labour power as part of a process to produce a product for another person’s needs to be met. Since the person is alienated from their own labour power, the person “no longer feels himself to be

freely active in any but his animal functions - eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in this dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human, and what is human becomes animal" (Marx 2007[1844]:73). In this sense, alienation removes a sense of humanity, since even private time that exists outside of work is filled with 'animal activities' rather than cognitive or creative activities.

Since Marx, the concept of alienation has been developed further. Blauner (1964, cited in O'Donohue and Nelson 2014) identifies alienation as a subjective feeling that varies from person to person along four areas: powerlessness (due to being controlled), meaninglessness (lack of understanding how own work contributes), isolation (not belonging) and self-estrangement (no identity). Negative work experiences such as downsizing, outsourcing, casualisation and/or computerisation of work contribute to alienation (O'Donohue and Nelson 2014). Alienation has a significant effect on mental health and productivity at the workplace (O'Donohue and Nelson 2014; Shantz, Alfes and Truss 2014). Furthermore, alienation can lead to work-place related alcoholism (Bacharach, Bamberger, and Sonnenstuhl 2002; Seeman and Anderson 1983) and suicide (Kawanishi 2008; Waters 2015; Waters, Karanikolos, and McKee 2016).

Self-alienation has expanded into areas of authenticity and truth. Costas and Fleming (2009) identify a tension between the work self and the imaginative, authentic self as a result of a "corporate colonisation of authenticity" when the organisation dominates and appropriates individual identities as worker identities (p. 372). This struggle between the external work identity and the internal authentic identity is a struggle of the visible/external and invisible/internal (Deetz 2003). Alienation has been identified as a 'bad side' of managerial and organisational life (Fleming and Spicer 2007), and also as a source of feelings such as powerlessness and meaninglessness (Seeman 1959).

The additions to alienation since Marx suggest there is a variety to a dystopian representation of alienation. A loss of humanity or a failure of interpersonal relationships can be the result of increasing animalisation or objectification of labour. In turning away from empirical observations of qualities such as struggle, identity, subjugation, and alienation, dystopia offers a way to extend this research into the

imagination. Hence, in identifying the qualities of organisational dystopia, one can see objectification, synoptic surveillance, and dehumanising alienation (see Chapter 5).

2.4.2 Themes of dystopia

To locate the themes of dystopia, one requires imagination. The imagination is an integral feature of social understanding. In *The Sociological Imagination,* Mills (2000) argues that a sociological imagination consists of an examination of intersections, such as norms, motives and relationships, in order to gain a sense of the self (biography) in situ within a context (history). Imagination is the ability to perceive everyday routines or actions from the perspective of another. Hence to identify themes of organisational dystopia, it is important to imagine oneself in the context of the paintings by Ishida.

Imagination is evidenced in stories, fantasies and art. Stories are a way for readers and listeners to envision and invent representations, based on language, so as to draw on meaning and metaphor in the shaping of everyday life (Boje 2003, 2008). Narratives and storytelling are significant practices in the formulation and preservation of workplace identities, practices and values (Boje 2003). Fantasies are foundations of mental life as representations of desire, satisfaction and fulfilment (Gabriel 1991, 1995, 1999). These fantasies have the ability to motivate and inspire, and thus drive individuals forward in work. Fantasies may also demotivate and depress when individuals focus on negative representations, such as isolation, powerlessness and despair.

Paintings are a different from stories and fantasies in exercising the imagination. In contrast to systems of language or a psychoanalytic frame of desire, art uses symbols, metaphors, form and colour to conceive of, and to perceive, different experiences (Buster and Crawford 2010). Hence, what paintings of dystopia provide is a way of imagining, through visual interactions, different perspectives and experiences of work that are constrained or excluded from systems of language (storytelling) or psychoanalysis. As a result, art offers a way to observe individual variations of a reality that was not previously attended to.

Imagination does not consist only of how individuals conceive of, or perceive, ideas and meanings; imagination is also a foundation of research. Karl Weick

(1989:529) argues that disciplined imagination is central to the production of theory since:

> Organisations are complex, dynamic and difficult to observe, which means that whenever we think about them, the thinking will be guided by indirect evidence and visualisations of what they may be like…it [thinking] emphasises that theorists depend on pictures, maps and metaphors to grasp the object of study…The fact that theory construction makes full use of representation is its strength, not its weakness.

Weick (1989) argues that imagination and representation are foundations to theory creation. Hence, using paintings to generate themes of dystopia is a valued step in generating contribution to new knowledge on organisational dystopia.

Dystopia as a technique is often utilised by writers to envision the worst outcome(s) in order to warn and incite change (Gordin, Tilley and Prakash 2010). One of the ways dystopias incite change is through the paradox of dystopia, in which readers or observers are 'shocked' into the hopelessness of no escape (endure) or the hopefulness of escaping to a new place (Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007; Rhodes 2007). Themes of enduring dystopia or escaping dystopia are present in many representations of dystopia. For instance, at the conclusion of *1984*, Winston, following his betrayal of Julia and his torture, is brainwashed. He finds it easier to love Big Brother than to resist since he is already dead inside. This is an example of enduring dystopia. At the conclusion of *We*, the Green Wall separating the order of civilisation and the freedom of nature is broken; the novel ends with the hope of an uprising from the Mephi, a rebel group based in the untamed green space. This is an example of escaping dystopia to a new land (green space). In *Brave New World*, the Savage cannot bear to continue in his suffering. His suicide is a final act to rid himself of dystopia in death. This is an alternative type of escape in that the Savage does not leave to a new land, instead he leaves reality all-together.

The themes of endure (hopelessness) and escape (hopefulness) are ways in which a dystopia can provide an 'antidote' or means to survive or escape (Gherardi, Nicolini and Strati 2007). Death is an important consequence to consider, since suicide is an under-researched area within organisation studies (Bell, Tienari and Hansson

2014; Cullen 2014; Walter 2014). Further, the variations of death, whether as the death to an identity or suicide of the body, are themes to pursue in addressing organisational dystopia.

Besides the themes of death present in dystopia, it is also important to consider that the themes represented in a dystopia are extensions of the creator's imagination. Hence dystopias presented in art are a micro-revelation of the artist's own experiences. The Surrealist paintings by Ishida are a means for Ishida to express his experiences of organisational life as a failed Japanese salaryman. His paintings are a way to cope with or expose the suffering of work. For instance, he refers to a death of the self in *Drawer* (1996), or reflects on suicide in *Rooftop Refugee* (1996). He also represents a need to cope with work through alcohol, including trips to the pub in *Leaving the Pub* (1995) and *Beer Garden Take-off* (1995). The resonating themes of death and alcohol are areas of research that have yet to be widely and deeply discussed by organisational scholars, though they are areas of practical research for industry workers and human resource managers.

Escape, suicide, and alcoholism are ways to resist dystopia. Resistance has overwhelmed organisation studies, leading to ambiguous definitions and categories (Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Dahl 1957; Hodson, Roscigno and Lopez 2006; Hollander and Einwohner 2004; Pickering 2000; Prasad and Prasad 2000). By examining resistance as a theme in organisational dystopia, this is a way to reflect on the motivation of enduring or escaping a dystopia.

2.5 Surrealism for organisation studies

Surrealism is a social movement that originated in 1924 in Paris with the publication of the *Surrealist Manifesto* by André Breton. The movement began as a way of engaging alternatives of reality, namely dreams and fantasy, as sites of resistance against the rationality and normality of society (Aspley 2010; Breton 1924; Hopkins 2016; Waldberg 1965). Surrealism originated in literature and poetry, though later adopted paintings as its most noticeable creations. Surrealism is an interesting area of research due to the organising features of the movement, and its subsequent products of organising: paintings.

Surrealism is not a new area of engagement for organisational scholars. Amongst the few scholars who have approached Surrealism, some argue that it is a

movement that has influenced organisation studies. For example, Carr and Zanetti (2000) remark that it has "permeated the field of organisation theory" and therefore organisational scholars are duty-bound to study it (p. 896). One of the ways in which Surrealism has entered organisation theory is in contradiction: challenging normative assumptions through shock, reflection and critical thinking (Carr and Zanetti 2000; Zanetti 2007). One such example is Gibson Burrell's *Pandemonium*, in which juxtaposing or unexpected formatting shocks the reader. Burrell's text is an example of the Surrealists who usurped "linear correspondence" and "logical/familiar associations" (Carr 2003:13). Another example of Surrealism influencing organisation studies is the argument that Surrealism is a historical precondition of the 'Spirituality at Work' movement, which draws attention to the tensions between the limitations of the body (physical) in contrast to the freedom of imagination (internal world) (Corbett 2009).

Besides the argument that Surrealism is present in organisation studies, Carr (2003) also suggests that contemporary postmodern organisational theorists share similarities with the Surrealists. "In addition to *playfulness,* the *clash-of-opposites*, and *intertwining of form and content,* other 'surrealist' techniques can be noted in the work of the group of writers who claim, or invoke, the insights of postmodernists in the organisation discourse" (p. 26). Contradiction and the meeting of form and content are visible themes of Surrealist paintings.

Surrealists also share similarities with the Frankfurt School, and thus the field of CMS. The 'estrangement effect' proposed by the Frankfurt School is evidenced in Surrealist paintings since the artists create distance and reflection by unsettling the recognised world with fantastical contradictions and shock. This estrangement and unsettling of reality, Carr and Zanetti (2000) argue, are precedents for organisational theorists that is made by the Surrealists. Therefore, studying Surrealism is a significant component to understanding the preceding conditions of CMS and organisation studies. In addition, the critical nature of Surrealism to resist society is a connection to CMS, whose researchers seek to resist the normative ideas and insights of organisation studies (Adler, Forbes, and Willmott 2007; Fournier and Grey 2000). Hence, the links between Surrealism, CMS, and organisation studies suggest that there is an interest in this social movement.

Besides the interest in Surrealism as a social movement, there is also support for studying the products of this movement: Surrealist paintings. In *Art and Aesthetics at Work*, one of the main arguments raised by Carr and Hancock (2003) is the potential for art to provide nuanced, alternative ways of examining organisational life. This is because art is an estrangement from reality. Thus art acts as a gateway into the invisible imagination of organisational life, and as an image to observe organisational experiences.

Of the extant research in organisation studies that addresses Surrealism, there exists a clear argument that studying Surrealism is a relevant and significant contribution to the field for various reasons. One reason is that Surrealism is a precedent for organisation studies and CMS (e.g. Carr 2003; Carr and Zanetti 2000; Corbett 2009). Another reason is that Surrealism still remains an underdeveloped area in which to explore other theoretical frames of critique, such as feminism (e.g. Caws 1986; Chadwick 1998; Zanetti 2007). This thesis argues that Surrealism is a crucial aspect of organisation studies and CMS, since Surrealism is a gateway to investigating organisational dystopia.

2.6 Summary

This thesis is situated among CMS, dystopia and Surrealism via the analysis and interpretation of paintings by the contemporary Surrealist artist Tetsuya Ishida. These paintings are examined for qualities and themes of organisational dystopia. CMS is an area to engage with organisational research through an interdisciplinary approach while raising criticisms about work.

Dystopia is one way to critique work through the imagination. Dystopia is represented through popular culture, which is a significant part of CMS (Brewis and Jack 2009). By observing representations of organisational dystopia in Surrealist paintings, this research aims to expand CMS investigations of culture into high art. Dystopia and paintings are a way to access marginalised or silenced perspectives of organisational life, such as Japanese salarymen.

Surrealism is a relevant social movement and artistic genre through which to examine organisational dystopia since it is linked to CMS and organisation studies. Furthermore, products of Surrealism include paintings, which are a way to observe the imagination of organisational dystopia. Paintings have been evaded in organisation

study, yet this thesis argues there is a future for organisation studies and CMS to use paintings as a source for investigation via an interdisciplinary approach.

3. An overview of Surrealism

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to overview Surrealism so the reader has an understanding to the complexities and intricacies that influence and categorise Surrealist art. Surrealism originated as a social movement. Hence, Surrealism was an organisation of interactions among members and international groups. Surrealism is also a genre of art. Therefore, as a product that stems from this social movement of resistance, artworks of Surrealism are noted for their representation of a Surrealist ideology. Due to this, Surrealist paintings, both then and now, are categorised as Surrealist for their representation of contradiction and use of individual styles and themes.

Surrealism is an interesting subject matter for organisation studies since it is an organisational case with its own imagination-based products of art (Carr 2003; Carr and Hancock 2003; Carr and Zanetti 2000; Zanetti 2007). From one perspective, Surrealism is a social movement with unique structures and identities. Organisation studies has sought to expand research into social movements and their organisations (Davis et. al. 2005; Della Porta and Diani 2009; Spicer and Böhm 2007). The social movement of Surrealism has grown since 1924, hence this thesis also traces the connection of early Surrealists of Paris with the global network of Surrealist groups today. This evidences that Surrealism did not 'die' when its leader André Breton died in 1966 (Löwy 2009). Rather, the evidence regarding Surrealist groups suggests that the movement has evolved.

From another perspective, originating from within the Surrealist movement is Surrealist art, a specific genre of aesthetics built on a history of social rebellion. In the latter part of this chapter, Surrealist art, including its qualities and individual styles, are addressed to show that there is a relation between Tetsuya Ishida's style and message and early Surrealist painters René Magritte and Salvador Dalí. criticism of his chapter, Surrealism as both a social movement and as a genre of art is acknowledged in order to set a foundation for assessing the contemporary Surrealist artworks by Tetsuya Ishida in relation to organisational dystopia.

3.2 A brief history of early Surrealism

Surrealism as a social movement emerged out of discontent and struggle with Dadaism, which was based in Zurich, Switzerland (Aspley 2010; Barr 1936). The intent of Dadaism was to negate social conformity through the preservation of individual freedom, which the Dadaists explored through a series of performances at the Cabaret Voltaire (Appignanesi 2004). When the leader of the Dada movement, Tristan Tzara, headed for Paris, he joined the staff of *Littérature* magazine in 1919, a team which also included André Breton, Philippe Soupault and Louis Aragon (Aspley 2010). These three individuals would go on to form Surrealism.

At this time *Littérature* was suffering from a lack of direction. The journal was a compilation of works based in different genres, including the Cubists and the writers Apollinaire and de Lautréamont (Browder 1957). Hence there was no clear direction. Tzara and Breton were soon in conflict on the direction of Dada following Breton's reading of Freud and psychoanalysis. Tzara (1918) regarded psychoanalysis as "a dangerous disease" (p. 277). Breton, by contrast, saw psychoanalysis as a way forward for social and political resistance. Due to this conflict, the Surrealists broke from Dada.

1924 marked a clear departure for Surrealism from Dadaism with the publication of the first *Surrealist Manifesto* by Breton in Paris. The Surrealists broke from Dada, citing not only an enthusiasm for psychoanalysis, but also a desire to look beyond negation into alternatives. In this sense, the Surrealists did not want to vehemently deny common sense and reality; rather, they urged individuals to address the unconscious, the imagination and dreams as opportunities for conceiving alternatives to reality. Hence, Surrealism came to be known as a movement of disruption and criticism, an aspect which would also influence its artists (Aspley 2010; Breton 1925, 1936; Gascoyne 1935; Waldberg 1965).

In the *Surrealist Manifesto* (1924:26), Breton defined Surrealism as:

> SURREALISM, *n.* Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express - verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner - the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.

With the first manifesto, Breton established himself as a leader of the movement. He also identified his collective Surrealist members, many of whom were established in the fields of literature and poetry. Due to this, early Surrealism was recognised by the written word (Morise 1924; Waldberg 1965). The formal list of individuals in Breton's (1924) *Surrealist Manifesto* was a crucial boundary in defining the inclusion and exclusion of members. This distinction would later become a source of contention (e.g. Breton 1930, 1946). The boundary of inclusion and exclusion of Surrealism is also an important site in the struggle for the inclusion of female Surrealists who, in these early accounts, were ignored (Caws 1986; Chadwick 1998; Zanetti 2007).

Following the first manifesto, Surrealism organised itself in two ways: as a structure of publications and as an organisation of research known as the Bureau of Surrealist Research. These two organising features are discussed in the following sections.

3.2.1 Organising protest in La Révolution Surréaliste

La Révolution Surréaliste was a journal published by the Surrealists in Paris that ran from 1924 to 1929. Under the direction of Pierre Naville and Benjamin Péret, the journal was an organising tool to stabilise the movement's identity, direction and membership. Each publication featured a particular theme of protest, such as suicide (issue 1), labour rights (issue 2), religion (issue 3) and sex (issue 11). It was also a way for Surrealists to converse with each other through published letters and essays. The journal would later publicise gallery exhibitions by its artists.

In the first publication, the Surrealists announced their agenda and published their first manifesto alongside a dark resistance of the world by means of suicide, death and violence (Gascoyne 1935; see Image 4). The second issue opened with an essay by Breton (1925a) titled "La Dernière Grève" ('The Last Strike') about the 'slavery' of workers who, fixed in their status, conform to a state of thralldom. In contrast he (1925a:2) argued that artists, philosophers and scientists are liberated from work (translated by author):

> Nous ne somas guère des travailleurs; c'est pers. toujours nous embarrasser fort que de nous poser la question d'usage: < Travaillez-vous

en ce moment? > (Peut-on dire qu'Hercule, que Christophe Colomb, que Newon travaillaient?)

We [Surrealists] are not workers; it is almost always embarrassing to ask ourselves a question of use: < Are you working now? > (Can it be said that Hercules, that Christopher Columbus, that Newton were working?)

Surrealists orientate themselves in a position of privilege: not engaging with the chains of work, but with the freedoms of creation, imagination and questioning. Therefore, in order to break free from their enslavement, Breton (1925a) advises labourers to strike in order to gain power, to behave deviantly and defiantly, so that they may be free to formulate their own thoughts. The suggestion of a labour strike is a link between the Surrealist Breton and his enthusiasm for Marxism (Browder 1967).

Image 4. *La Révolution Surréaliste*, Cover of Issue 1 (1924)

The direction of Péret and Naville of *La Révolution Surréaliste* did not last long. In 1925, Breton (1925c) opened the journal with an essay: "Pourquoi je prends la direction de *La Révolution Surréaliste*" ('Why I take the direction of *La Révolution*

Surréaliste'). The change of directorship was due to a debate over the legitimacy of painting as a practice and product of Surrealism (Gascoyne 1935). For instance, Naville (1925:27) remarked in the third issue of the journal, "Plus personne n'ignore qu'il n'y a pas de *peinture surréaliste*" ('Everyone knows that there is no *surrealist painting*'). In contrast, Breton (1925b), who took over the journal in the fourth issue, opened with an essay entitled "Le Surréalisme et la Peinture" ('Surrealism and Painting'). Breton argued that art is capable of communicating and acting as resistance while also presenting the dream. He referenced Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque as examples of artists whose styles were in revolt against traditional art.

The inclusion of Surrealist painting set the direction of the Surrealist movement, as it would later be renowned for its paintings (Aspley 2010; Bell 1985; Jean 1967; Waldberg 1965). It was an important moment in destabilising the Surrealist identity, since artists could now be identified as Surrealist members (previously they had not been). This inclusion of artists was a source of discontent. For example, Dalí, nicknamed 'Avida Dollars', was perceived by some as undermining the authenticity of the movement due to his personality and commercial antics (Browder 1967).

La Révolution Surréaliste lasted for twelve issues until it ended in 1929. The majority of its issues were published under the direction of Breton. The journal was an important way of organising the movement by discerning who could speak (essays and letters), who was worthy of observation (artists), and highlighting the organisations supported by the movement (advertisements). The organisational features of *La Révolution Surréaliste* were continued after 1929, when Breton organised the publication of the journal *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* ('*Surrealism at the service of the revolution*') from 1930 to 1933.

Outside of Paris, Surrealism began to spread through a network of journals. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, the journal *Que?* ('*What?*') published its first issue in 1928 in the format of *La Révolution Surréaliste.* The journal featured a collective engagement with social resistance through fantasy while adopting pseudonyms (Minguzzi 2013). In New York a Surrealist group formed under the supervision of Breton, who moved to the city during World War II (Hopkins 2016). The New York Surrealists published their own journal, known as *VVV* from 1942 to 1944, which was edited by the American artist David Hare (Art Institute of Chicago 2001). This

American journal was important to the history of the Surrealist movement since it fostered a connection between the European and the American Surrealists. This connection was instrumental in strengthening ideological and monetary support.

The journals were a way to network communication as well as for Surrealist groups to devise their own identity. For instance, in California in the mid-1930s, a group known as the 'post-Surrealists' came together under the principles of Surrealism. They chose to reject dreams and irrational images in order to focus on order and rationality (Landauer, Gerdts, and Trenton 2003). In another example, the Surrealist movement spread to London, England. At the time there was tension about the degree of the London group's authenticity to the original Parisian Surrealists, so a group of Birmingham Surrealists, led by the Melville brothers and Conroy Maddox, formed their own group in Birmingham, England (Levy 2003). This group sought to retain the 'pure' nature of the Parisian Surrealists in England (Levy 2003).

In order to trace the connections between the Parisian Surrealists and the other Surrealist groups, I created Figure 1 below. This figure traces selected known groups, including those who broke off from the original group in Paris. The breakaway of smaller groups, such as the post-Surrealists and the Birmingham Surrealists, are marked by their 'visual turn' in the figure. When I designed this figure, I included notable members of each group. Noticeably individuals from the original Paris group, such as E.L.T. Mesens, was influential in organising other Surrealist groups. Mesens was influential in organising the Belgian Surrealist group before heading to London to help edit their Surrealist journal *London Bulletin* (Hopkins 2016). And Breton was important in forming *VVV* in New York (Art Institute of Chicago 2001; Hopkins 2016). The figure is produced from a reading of Aspley (2010) and Hopkins (2016). This figure is modelled after the image "Firmamente Dada" by Adrian Notz in the *Dada Handbook* (2015).

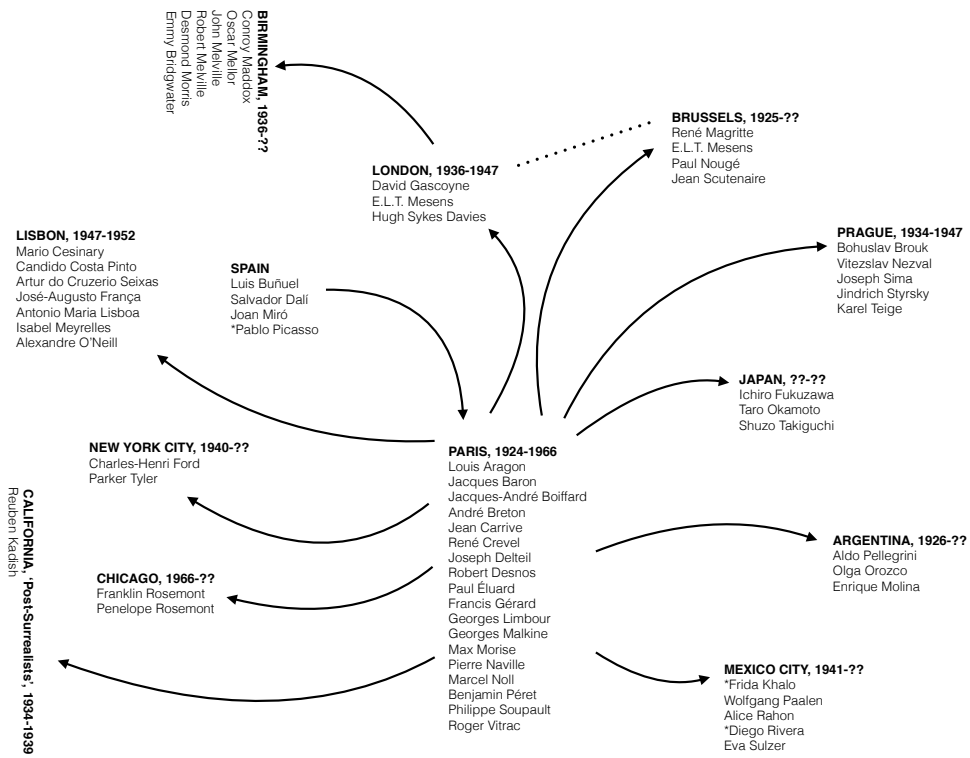

Figure 1. Surrealist movement and selected known groups

Journals were a network to stabilise identities and members, and also spread the Surrealist message. The translation of these journals led some groups to break away and establish themselves by reinterpreting Surrealist material and practices. Journals were a way to establish Surrealism as a social movement beyond Paris. As an area of future research, one could address how a social movement moves geographically and conceptually by evolving through journals. One might also trace academic journals in organisation studies as a network of organisation. Further, one might examine how the Surrealist network of journals was inspiration for the network of academic journals today. Thus, further research into the publications of Surrealism can expand the awareness to the preconditions of organisation studies.

3.2.2 Organising scientific research in the Bureau of Surrealist Research

Beyond organising a journal network, the Surrealists also organised the 'Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes' ('Bureau of Surrealist Research'). This formal research institution opened in Paris at Number 15, Rue de Grenelle in October 1924 (Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes 1925a, 1925b; Gascoyne 1935). The purpose of

this facility was to research the people of society, in particular the extent to which a person's values and thoughts are unstable and can be challenged (Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes 1925a, 1925b).

Like the Surrealist movement, the institution 'was determined to start a revolution' ("Nous sommes bien décidés à faire une Révolution") (Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes 1925b), although the aim of this organisation was to research cognitive fragility, rather than protest about politics, society, religion and labour. The research by the Bureau was significant to the Surrealists, since the breaking of cognitive conformity meant freedom from a normalised rationality and judgement, which anchored and chained the liberal imagination.

Though the Bureau made a visible impression in *La Révolution Surréaliste*, such as in the "Declaration of January 27, 1925", their methods for scientific research and participant data are not known (Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes 1925b). A BBC (2014a) documentary claimed that from 16.30 to 18.30 every day, except Sunday, a member of the Bureau interviewed members of the public and asked them to 'confess' their dreams and nightmares. However the interview techniques, data selection, and method of analysis are, to my knowledge, not discussed in contemporary texts, documentaries or journal issues.

The mysteriousness of the Bureau is something its members acknowledge in their declaration. The Bureau members (1925a:31) declared (translated by author):

> Le Bureau de Recherches surréalistes s'emploie à recueillir par tous les moyens appropriés les communications relatives aux diverses formes qu'est susceptible de prendre l'activité inconsciente de l'esprit … le surréalisme se propose de rassembler le plus grand nombre possible de données expérimentales, à une fin qui ne peut encore apparaître.
>
> *The Bureau of Surrealist Research is working to collect by any appropriate means communications relating to diverse forms of what is likely to assume unconscious activity ... surrealism proposes to assemble the largest volume of possible experimental data, for a purpose which has not yet appeared.*

The ‘not yet appeared’ purpose of the Bureau was one of the reasons for this organisations demise. In addition to a lack of direction, members of the public were not interested in revealing their intimate selves to strangers. Therefore, the Bureau closed on January 30, 1925 due to ineffectiveness (Bureau de Recherches 1925a). The short-lived Bureau was an important part of early Surrealism as an organisation that sought to act as an interface between the movement and the public (Spicer and Böhm 2007). The Bureau was significant support for the movement as an ‘organ of connection’ (“un organ de liaison”) by organising its members and bringing together the general public and the Surrealists (Bureau de Recherches 1925b).

One of the interesting qualities of the Bureau was the irony of the Surrealists to adopt a formal institutional setting to engage with scientific methods of inquiry while they espoused the freedom of irrationality and imagination. While the Surrealists established their movement as a revolt against rationality (Breton 1924), the Bureau was a dedicated organisation for generating knowledge through research methods. The importance of irrationality for the Surrealist movement rested uncomfortably alongside the Bureau’s rational practices, especially since the first manifesto argues psychic automatism and the arts are central to unconscious, irrational freedom (Breton 1924; Corbett 2009; Lomas 2004). The tension between the organising of a Surrealist institution in comparison to the organising of a Surrealist network of journals is evidence to the complexities, conflicts, and challenges that impact the direction and content of Surrealism.

3.3 The evolution of Surrealism

Surrealism began as a critical stance on society. The Surrealists argued against rationality, conformity and normality. As this social movement developed, its critical nature turned inwards due to conflicts about the identity of Surrealism. The tension brought by new and varied Surrealist groups with their own journals and power struggles within the Parisian group led to a fiery second *Surrealist Manifesto* by Breton that was published in the final issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste.* Breton denounced and banished a variety of members, labelled “weeds” (Breton 1930:129), who tarnished the sanctity of the movement with their commercialism or political disloyalty (Breton 1930; Gascoyne 1935). Breton also disrupted the movement by

challenging its early identity and practices (Davis et. al. 2005) by divorcing Surrealism from its "historical antecedents", such as Freud (Breton 1930:126).

The expelled members responded to Breton's second manifesto in writing. In 1930 they published a pamphlet titled 'Un Cadavre' ('A Corpse') that featured a photo of Breton with closed eyes and a crown of thorns; also, the pamphlet included essays that called Breton a 'faux-frère' ('false brother') and 'flic' ('police') (Aspley 2010). These terms reflected the expelled members' view that Breton was a hypocritical leader; for example, the 'brothers' had a false sense of freedom since they were ironically expelled for acting freely in their own choice. Hence the Surrealist movement was a case of contradiction, since its members sought to emancipate themselves from reason and normality, nonetheless were enslaved into what were deemed acceptable behaviours based on Breton's own principles.

Breton exemplified the 'dark side' to leadership. His manipulation of the Surrealist identity led to personal attacks and undermined the Surrealist identity and movement. His leadership style earned him the nickname 'Pope Breton' (Edwards 2009:105). Alternative titles like this one suggest different labels to leadership that grasp at fantasy and contradiction (Blom and Alvesson 2015; Sutherland, Land, and Böhm 2014).

The expansion of Surrealism beyond Paris signified an expanded territory of resistance against society's rationality and conformity. Nonetheless, the development of local groups with unique interpretations of Surrealism damaged the unity of the movement. Hence, in the 1940s, a fear of dissolving friendships, collaborations and membership persisted (Breton 1946). This was also during World War II, a period when the Surrealist movement grew quiet due to the displacement of its members (Aspley 2010; Art Institute of Chicago 2001). When Breton died in 1966, the Paris Surrealist group dissolved a few years later in 1969 (Aspley 2010; Corbett 2009; Löwy 2009).

Concerned about the direction of the group following the death of its inaugural leader, the Surrealist writer Vincent Bounoure argued there was still a need for Surrealism to exist. So Bounoure conducted a survey of international Surrealist groups, and asked each group about their aims and interests (Hopkins 2016). Bounoure (1969) in "*Rien ou quoi?*" ('Nothing or what?'), cited in Löwy (2009), commented in the privately published questionnaire, "Must one believe, as some have

confided to me, that the magic circle has been broken? I am interested in making sure that it is not so. I am convinced that it depends on us to begin anew its manifestations" (p. 84). Unfortunately the survey and its results had a limited publication, hence the information was unavailable to access and analyse. Consequently, locating Bounoure's survey would mean retrieving an important document in which to examine the global network of Surrealism; it is a document which might reveal additional connections between a Surrealist network then to the network of Surrealist groups today.

Surrealism today does not retain the same influence as it did in the time of Breton. Nonetheless, Surrealist groups exist throughout the world, although their concerns have shifted away from political critique and the avant-garde to social concerns, such as work and gender (West 2004). Active Surrealist groups around the world were reported by the Surrealist Movement-USA (2006) at the International Surrealist Mini-Conference in Chicago, March 6-10, 2006:

> Active Surrealist groups now exist in Chicago, Paris, London, Leeds, Prague, Amsterdam, Madrid, Athens, Ioannina, Sao Paulo and Santiago (Chile). Smaller groups exist in Portland and St. Louis in the U.S.; and [there are] active individuals and/or reports of groups-in-formation in Dublin, Ireland; Dusseldorf and Koln (Germany); Buenos Aires, Brussels, Lisbon, Montreal and Vancouver.
>
> None of those present [at the mini-conference] had heard anything for a considerable period from the groups that had formerly existed in Sweden, Serbia or Australia. The question arose: Are these groups still active?

Besides active Surrealist groups, Surrealism remains an important historical topic. For instance, in 2015 a conference took place in Egypt called "The Egyptian Surrealists in a Global Perspective" which focused on the collaboration of the Egyptian Surrealists with their European counterparts (Sharjah Art Foundation 2015). In 2018 a conference on British women and Surrealism is due to be held in England (Relire l'entre-deux-guerres 2017). The journal *Dada/Surrealism* continues to publish issues on Surrealism and its predecessor. *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* publishes on the Surrealist influence on cultures in the Americas. In addition, the

Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacies, a partnership between the University of Essex, the University of Manchester and the Tate Museum, leads Surrealist studies in England (The University of Manchester, 2016). These groups, institutions and publications are evidence of a continued interest in Surrealism. In particular, the present research on Surrealism focuses on places outside of Paris. One such area to give attention to is Japan.

3.4 Surrealism in Japan

Surrealism originated in the 1920s in Japan. One of the Japanese Surrealists credited for the introduction of Surrealism to Japan was the poet Junzaburō Nishiwaki (Munro 2016). Nishiwaki left Japan for Paris in the 1920s, where he connected with the Surrealists and was enamoured with Surrealist poetry (Nishiwaki 2007). When he returned to Japan, Nishiwaki became Professor of Foreign Literature at Keiō University in Tokyo, and later won the Nobel Prize for Literature for his poetry (Munro 2016; Nishiwaki 2007).

At Keiō University, Nishiwaki taught another important Japanese Surrealist named Shūzō Takiguchi (Munro 2016). Surrealist scholars such as Aspley (2010) and Cabañas (2007) remark that Takiguchi was largely responsible for introducing Surrealism to Japan. A personal friend of Breton (Munro 2016), Takiguchi was a Surrealist poet and artist who also had a close relationship with Miró. Takiguchi often corresponded with the Spanish Surrealist artist and even wrote a book on Miró, which was published in Japan (Cabañas 2007).

Nishiwaki and Takiguchi were influential in forming a Surrealist group in the 1920s and 1930s, and also organised and supported the first Surrealist exhibition in Japan in 1932 (Bramble 2015). When describing the exhibition, Shūzō Takiguchi (1940), cited in Munro (2016), claimed, it “influenced the recently produced works of Japan’s young painters, but perhaps it is not difficult to guess the extent of assistance [provided] by our literary introduction. I cannot forget the noise and excitement of roaming around the exhibition spaces.” Takiguchi’s account of the exhibition revealed the literary and poetic start of the Surrealist movement in Japan and the influence of the Parisian Surrealists on the development of Japanese Surrealist painting.

Around this time a notable Japanese painter named Ichiro Fukuzawa left for France. Influenced by artists Max Ernst and Giorgio de Chirico, Fukuzawa used the

Surrealist style to form shocking images by juxtaposing contradictory objects (Solt 1999). The use of visual contradiction is a hallmark of Surrealist art that influenced the style of contemporary Surrealist artists, including Tetsuya Ishida.

Fukuzawa shared Surrealism in Japan after he returned in the early 1930s. In 1937 he published an introduction to Surrealism called *Surréalisme* (Munro 2016; Solt 1999). He also attempted to form a Surrealist group in 1939, though these efforts were hindered by the outbreak of World War II (Aspley 2010). In 1941, Fukazawa and Takiguchi were arrested and held for a year due to their Surrealist "ideological subversion" as part of national censorship (Munro 2016:154). At the time Surrealism was an identified threat to Japanese nationalism.

It was not until the 1950s that Japanese Surrealists again started to organise their own group. In 1956 Fukuzawa was influential in organising a Surrealist study group (Aspley 2010); it was during this period in post-war Japan that Surrealism and Surrealist art began to flourish (Munro 2016). For example, the painter Tarō Okamoto gained recognition for his Surrealist art, including the mural *Myth of Tomorrow* (1969, see Image 5). Okamoto had left for Paris in 1929, where he developed relationships with the Surrealists before returning to Japan in 1940 (Guggenheim 2017). Influenced by the Surrealists, he brought the avant-garde influence to Japan where, after World War II, he aimed to shock the Japanese art establishment (Tarō Okamoto Memorial Museum, no date). *Myth of Tomorrow* (1969) depicts an individual hit by an atomic bomb (Guggenheim 2017). This is observed as a white skeleton among red flames. The mural is a comment to the brutality of war in death.

Image 5. *Myth of Tomorrow* (1969)

There is a strong connection between the Parisian Surrealists and the Japanese Surrealists. This is due to the interaction of Japanese poets and artists with the early Parisian Surrealists, such as Breton, and the published works of *La Révolution Surréaliste*. As a result, the influence of contradiction, irrationality, and imagination is apparent in Japanese Surrealist art.

3.5 Surrealism as an art genre

Today, Surrealism is usually identified as an art genre rather than a social movement. The art critic Waldberg (1965) reflects, Surrealism "took shape in the world through the influence of painters" (p. 20; Aspley 2010; Bell 1984; Löwy 2009). Paintings were a crucial part of the movement since paintings are a means to represent and visualise the values of Surrealism (Breton 1924), including anti-rationality and contradiction (Aspley 2010; Breton 1936; Löwy 2009; Waldberg 1965).

Paintings were a source of early tension within the Surrealist movement. When Breton took over leadership of *La Révolution Surréaliste*, this signified a shift in the dominant Surrealist art form from writing to painting (Morise 1924). Artists such as René Magritte and Salvador Dalí were particularly influential in the Surrealist movement; these painters adopted a veristic style of art, which marked a departure from the psychic automatism of early Surrealist writing and sketching (Breton 1924). This veristic style allowed artists to intentionally and consciously order their images, rather than free drawing (Bell 1984). Hence, Surrealist art is known for its dreamy quality (Bell 1984).

This reflective quality of Surrealist paintings is a space for artists to be critical and develop their art as a personal extension of themselves. For this reason, there are two themes that characterise the genre of Surrealist paintings. First, the Surrealists favoured contradiction as a way to shock the observer. Second, the freedom of the Surrealist genre allowed for artists to develop their own styles. This also meant the artist depicted their own themes.

3.5.1 Surrealist paintings and contradiction

Contradiction was a critical theme of the Surrealist movement. Since contradiction was a way to destabilise rationality and normalcy by juxtaposing objects, people, and settings (Alden 1999; Balakian 1986). The Surrealist interest in

contradiction was derived from the works of Comte de Lautréamont, an alias for the writer Isidore Ducasse, who wrote *Les Chants de Maldoror* ('*Songs of Maldoror*') in 1868-69. The story revolves around Maldoror, an amoral villain who destroys and loathes humankind. While the Surrealists were primarily interested in the tale for its depiction of resistance to society and a call for freedom (Waldberg 1965), one of the enduring influences of the book by de Lautréamont's was its imagery. One of the most frequently quoted passages of de Lautréamont (1868/1869[1965]:263) is this:

> He is as handsome as the retractability of the claws of birds of prey; or again, as the uncertainty of the muscular movements of wounds in the soft parts of the posterior cervical region; or rather as the perpetual rat-trap, re-set each time by the trapped animal, that can catch rodents indefinitely and works even when hidden beneath straw; and especially as the fortuitous encounter upon a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella!

This quote fascinated the Surrealists due to the visual contradictions of finding a sewing-machine, an umbrella and a dissecting table together (Aspley 2010; Hopkins 2016; Waldberg 1965). Breton (1927), cited in Carr and Hancock (2003), elaborated on the significance of object contradiction: "The external object had broken with its customary surroundings, its component parts were somehow emancipated from the object in such a way as to set up entirely new relationships with other elements, escaping from the principle of reality while still drawing upon the real plane (and overthrowing the idea of correspondence)" (p. 13). The new relationship is generated from objects of reality being juxtaposed with non-corresponding objects in an imaginative context, thereby inducing shock through the unexpected.

There are many examples of contradiction in Surrealist paintings. One example is Magritte's *Time Transfixed* (1938) of a black locomotive floating out of an empty fireplace. These realistic objects are presented in an imaginative contradiction. Hence the painting provokes a reflection on the perception of everyday objects. There is also the clash of body and object. The contemporary Surrealist painter Gülin Hayat Topdemir's painting *Carousel* (2011) features a woman with her pale arms outstretched in the form of Jesus on the cross with carousel horses in the background. The dark image is a feminist perspective on a loss of innocence, or the painting can be

interpreted as female sacrifice. Tetsuya Ishida exhibits a similar type of contradiction in the objectification of the human body; in *Interview* (1998), the interviewer is a male person whose body is replaced with the body of a microscope. The interviewers eyes are the last identifiable human feature. As will be discussed in the later chapters, the contradiction of body and object in Ishida's paintings is a representation of objectification.

Contradiction was a significant feature of the Surrealist movement and is a theme in Surrealist paintings. The Surrealist Louis Aragon, cited in Aspley (2010), claimed, "Le merveilleux, c'est la contradiction qui apparaît dans le reel" ('The most marvellous thing is the contradiction that appears in the real') (p. 374). The significance in representing contradiction in an image is that the objects of reality are juxtaposed in an imaginative spirit. Hence the estrangement from reality that the Surrealists are known for is also a way to address dystopia. Since dystopia is also an estrangement from reality. Thus, contradiction is an important element to identifying the qualities and themes of an organisational dystopia.

In sum, contradiction is the way to escape the rationality of reality. Breton (1936) cried, "ô Picasso, vous qui avez porté à son suprême degré l'espirit, non plus de contradiction, mass d'évasion!" ('O Picasso, you who have transported to its highest level the spirit, no longer of contradiction, but of escape!'). In other words, contradiction is an important visual technique to enable shock and criticism, as well as the escape from the confinement and limitations of reality.

3.5.2 Surrealist paintings and individual style

Another significant quality of Surrealist art is individual style. When Breton declared that the content of a painting was more important than the practice of painting (Breton 1925b, 1936), this allowed for the development of individual styles. Since Surrealist artists no longer had to conform to psychical practices like free-drawing. Therefore, Surrealist paintings are known for individual diversity and variety, given the freedom to explore artistic styles and symbols. Another reason for the freedom of developing individual styles is that Surrealism values the dream, particularly the expression of the individual's dream (Jean 1967). Therefore, the artistic styles and symbols painted by a Surrealist artist are highly personal.

While Surrealist artists explored individual styles, this did not mean that there were no themes throughout Surrealist art. For example, one prevailing theme was death. In paintings by René Magritte, the observer can often see a white cloth covering the head of the painted subjects. This white cloth is a symbol drawn from the death of Magritte's mother, who committed suicide by drowning. His mother was pulled out of the river with her white nightdress covering her face (Alden 1999; Forceville 1988). Other art critics interpret the representation of mortality in Salvador Dalí's paintings. For example, the repeating symbol of a melting clock signified the 'melting' of time, or the foreboding death of life (Shanes 2012). Death is also a theme present in Tetsuya Ishida's paintings. For example, I interpret the dead salaryman in a makeshift coffin with his head surrounded by lilies as a sign of an internal struggle with one's 'death' of identity (Horikiri 2010; Yokoyama 2010). From this brief analysis, it is evident that there are themes to Surrealist art that are common among artists, including death. Yet how the artists communicate the the theme of death is individual to their experience or style.

Another theme of individual style is the representation of artists in their own paintings. Magritte famously portrayed himself in his paintings with a black bowler. One of his most famous paintings, *The Son of Man* (1964), is a self-portrait of Magritte in his signature hat with his face hidden by a floating green apple. The contemporary Surrealist Ishida likewise depicts himself in his paintings. Art critics identify the salarymen with short hair and a plain, apathetic face in Ishida's paintings as an ambiguous self-portrait of Ishida (Horikiri 2010). The notion of an ambiguous self-image is unique to Ishida's individual style. In one sense, the ambiguous self-image creates a mystery, as does Magritte's *The Son of Man* (1964). In another interpretation, art specialists point out that the ambiguous self-portrait style is a critique to the Lost Decade, in which there was a generational 'loss of self' (Horikiri 2010). The presence of the artist in the painting is an important freedom to the Surrealist style; it meant that artists were not only creators, but also subjects of their art. Hence the interpretation of Surrealist art is not only aesthetic, but also personal.

The freedom of individual expression created a problem for the Surrealist genre. The flexibility to include a variety of individual styles, symbols, and cultural references created tensions in the identity of Surrealism. For instance, in Breton's (1945) preface to the second *Surrealist Manifesto,* he argued the varied representations

of Surrealism generated conflict on the direction of Surrealism. Today, the flexibility of the Surrealist genre remains an issue. Since the development of technology, including new methods of photography and digital production, have added to the already great diversity of Surrealist art (Aspley 2010).

Thus, the individual style is a key component to the identification of Surrealist art. In addition to the representation of contradiction, Surrealist art is noted for its ability to express criticism, irrationality, and imagination. In *Surrealism and Painting* Breton (1936) elaborated on the power of painting, "It seems to me that I can demand a great deal from a faculty which, above almost all others, gives me advantages over the real, over what is vulgarly understood by *the real*" (p. 11). Thus Surrealist painting, in its space for communicating the imagination, is a site to examine the estrangement of the real, such as organisational dystopia.

3.6 Surrealist paintings then and now

One of the concerns in analysing and interpreting the paintings by contemporary Surrealist artist Tetsuya Ishida is that he is relatively unknown in contrast to the early Surrealist artists like Magritte and Dalí. Further, colleagues have asked how Ishida can be a Surrealist artist when the Paris group ended following Breton's death. I address these two points in this section.

I have already presented some links between Ishida and Magritte and Dalí in the previous section. To address this connection further, and therefore ameliorate any concern that Ishida is not a Surrealist, I turn to a brief overview of Magritte and Dalí.

René Magritte [1898-1967] was a veristic Surrealist painter from Belgium. In 1927, Magritte settled outside of Paris where he met André Breton (Gablik 1970). At first Magritte was excluded from the Surrealist group due to his different political orientation (Alden 1999; Gablik 1970). However, following Breton's crucial decision to include painters as Surrealist members, Magritte was included in the Paris group and also featured in European Surrealist exhibitions throughout the 1930s (Aspley 2010). Nevertheless, Magritte's involvement with the Parisian Surrealist group was short-lived. In 1930 Magritte returned to Belgium, where he stayed with the Belgian Surrealist group (Gablik 1970).

The individual style of Magritte is well known within the Surrealist art genre. As mentioned previously, the symbolism of the white cloth and the distinctive bowler

hat were frequently depicted in Magritte's paintings. For example, the white cloth is a feature in Magritte's painting titled *The Lovers* (1928, see Image 6). While the white cloth is interpreted as a symbol of death (Alden 1999; Wilson 1975), curators at The Museum of Modern Art (2017a) interpret the cloth as a quality of mystery. "The inability to fully unveil the true nature of even our most intimate companions" is a comment on the hidden self (The Museum of Modern Art 2017a).

Image 6. *The Lovers* (1928)

The bowler hat is also a significant symbol and theme to Magritte's paintings. The varied interpretation of the bowler hat is summarised by art critic and director Alden (1999), "For Magritte, the bowler hat that he wears until his death - a symbol of the bourgeois Everyman - is reminiscent of the mask worn by his favourite pulp novel anti-hero, Fantômas. It is a prop that conceals his identity beneath the guise of everyday life" (Alden 1999:31). In other words, the bowler hat is an identifiable feature of Magritte, a symbol for a particular social class, and also a reference to the early Surrealist hero Fantômas. The multiple interpretations of meaning about the bowler hat is also a suggestion for a multi-interpretive stance to evaluating Surrealist art. In other words, there is not one correct meaning of a Surrealist painting, rather, a Surrealist painting has many interpretations given different vantage points of knowledge. For example, a knowledge of the artist, context, or Surrealist history.

Salvador Dalí [1904-89] learned of Surrealism through Guillermo de Torre's *Literaturas europas de vanguardia*, published in 1925, when Torre recounted the

development and spread of Surrealism from Paris onwards. De Torre (1925[2001]: 258) wrote (translated by author):

> El superrealismo debía significar para él un predominio absoluto de la fantasía, de las razones de la imagininación, que la razón - pura - no conoce - capaces de desplazar totalmente la vida real; una afirmación renovada del poderío transmutador del arte, modelando libérrimamente la arcilla de la realidad.
>
> *The superrealism [Surrealism] should be significant for him as an absolute predominance of the fantasy, of the reasons of the imagination, that the reason - pure - that he does not know - is capable of totally displacing real life; a renewed affirmation of art's transmutational power, liberally modelling the clay of reality.*

The imagination, or 'modelling the clay of reality', was of interest to Dalí; therefore, in 1926 he went to visit Picasso, one of the early artistic influences of the Surrealist movement (Shanes 2012; e.g. Breton 1924, 1936). Following his visit, Dalí joined the Surrealist group in Paris, where he caused conflict due to his personality. For instance, Dalí wore a scuba suit to a Surrealist exhibition, where he nearly died from suffocation (Shanes 2012). Breton also criticised Dalí as a sellout who undermined the sanctity of the movement as social resistance due to his escapades (Hopkins 2010).

Like Magritte, Dalí's personal tragedies impacted his art. The death of his elder brother and mother influence the continued theme of darkness and decay in Dalí's own work. For example, the melting clock as a sign of impending death. Other symbols, such as ants, are interpreted by art critics as symbols of decomposition and death (Shanes 2012). Both a melting clock and ants appear in one of Dalí's famous paintings, *The Persistence of Memory* (1931, see Image 7). Curators and art critics at The Museum of Modern Art (2017b) remark that the painting is a criticism of reality, in which time, though logically understood, is nonetheless felt differently than its scientific meaning. Hence, this interpretation is evidence in the presentation of a Surrealist intent to resist rationality and objectivity, such as in the sequence versus sensation of time. An additional interpretation of the painting is in reflection of Freud,

particularly the "persistence of our subconscious, our instinctive nature to manifest itself through conscious expression. By using timepieces as his symbols, Dalí is reminding his viewers that our memories serve to consciously catalogue past events" (McNeese 2006:69). Hence memories, such as those of death, impact and shape the viewing of everyday life.

Image 7. *The Persistence of Memory* (1931)

Magritte and Dalí were Surrealists artists whose oeuvre represents the veristic style (Bell 1984). This veristic style is significant in order to maintain the appearance of an estrangement from reality, so as to establish a connection with reality that can be critiqued and contradicted (Waldberg 1965). This veristic style of Surrealist art is also seen in contemporary paintings by Tetsuya Ishida and George Tooker. I include George Tooker in this comparison so as to show additional evidence that Tetsuya Ishida is a Surrealist, due to his connection with past Surrealist artists like Magritte and Dalí and contemporary Surrealist artists like Tooker. In addition to a shared veristic style, there are continued themes of darkness, death, and contradiction present among Surrealist work.

Tetsuya Ishida is a contemporary Surrealist artist who represents organisational dystopia. A graduate from Musashino Art University in Tokyo in 1996, Ishida began to focus on his paintings in the 1990s until his death in 2005 (Gagosian 2017), when he was hit by a train (Yokoyama 2010). While some claim that it was an accident (e.g. Yokoyama 2010), other sources write that Ishida died by suicide (e.g. WorkshopLoVi 2014). Before his death, Ishida created around 180 artworks (Horikiri 2010), and some

of his paintings are exhibited in galleries and museums in Japan, China, and the United States (Gagosian 2017). Prior to dedicating himself to art, Ishida worked in graphic design and advertising, for which he won awards in 1995 and 1996 (Ishida 2010). Hence, the representation of Ishida's salarymen are not only a comment on what exists ‘out there', but also an extended personal reflection of his work experience made visible to the observer.

Ishida's representations of organisational dystopia present qualities of conformity, despair, hopelessness and powerlessness of the salaryman (Yokoyama 2010). And address critique to organisations and management through themes of privacy and escape. Masato Horikiri (2010), Chief Curator at the Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art in Japan, adds that Ishida was concerned with the loss of human-to-human interaction, which was due to developments in technology and machines. Hence, themes in Ishida’s oeuvre include a decay of relationships, alienation, and loneliness (Horikiri 2010).

One of the themes of Ishida’s work is the synthesis of the human body with object. This synthesis is acknowledged by art critics and curators (e.g. Horikiri 2010) as an example of the Surrealist technique of contradiction. In this manner, the treatment of the body as object signifies an objectification of a person. This visual technique is important to raising criticism and adopting alternative perspectives. As Ishida (2001) wrote, “If you live an ordinary life, that’s just everyday life, isn’t it? What if you looked at it from a slightly different point of view?” (cited in Yokohama 2010:226). This different point of view to life is materialised in art.

George Tooker (1920-2011) was a painter associated with the Surrealist genre due to his mysterious, dreamlike paintings that utilise the human experience as subject (DC Moore Gallery 2011). Tooker was “consistent in providing a framework of social commentary and humanistic content for his art” such as “the impersonality of society” (Wechsler 1985:294; Spring and Tooker 2002). Similarly to Ishida, Tooker was known for depicting organisational life in paintings like *Government Bureau* (1956). Tooker was “a painter whose haunting images of trapped clerical workers and forbidding government offices expressed a peculiarly 20th-century brand of anxiety and alienation” (Grimes 2011) . Hence Tooker is not only linked in subject to Ishida, but also evidences that contemporary Surrealist art addresses organisations as a site of criticism.

One of Tooker's most famous paintings, *The Subway* (1950, see Image 8), depicts the alienation and anxiety that Tooker's paintings are known for. Alienation and anxiety are visually expressed on the face of the central woman in the red dress and on the face of the brown-coated figure who is half-hidden by the tiled wall. *The Subway* is at the Whitney Museum of American Art (2017), where its curators add:

> In *The Subway*, Tooker employed multiple vanishing points and sophisticated modelling to create an imagined world that is presented in a familiar urban setting … each androgynous, anxiety-ridden figure appears psychologically estranged, despite being physically close to others in the station. The central group of commuters is locked in a grid of the metal grating's cast shadows, while the labyrinthine passages seem to lead nowhere, suspending the city's inhabitants in a modern purgatory.

Image 8. *The Subway* (1950)

The interpretation of Tooker's painting *The Subway* is relevant for three reasons. First, it communicates the 'sophisticated modelling' as an organisational quality to the painting. Thus paintings are products of organising. Second, the focus on the face to identify anxiety and alienation is of similar importance in the interpretation of Ishida's paintings, which feature the dejected expressions of salarymen. Third, the interpretation of 'a modern purgatory' elicits images of dystopia as nightmarish imaginative setting (Manguel 2003). Therefore dystopia, or at least a dark criticism to the experience of daily life, is a theme observable in contemporary Surrealist art. This

also supports an argument for observing organisational dystopia in contemporary Surrealist paintings.

There is a link between Tetsuya Ishida and his fellow contemporary Surrealist George Tooker with the early Surrealists, including René Magritte and Salvador Dalí. The relative 'unknown-ness' of Ishida in comparison to Magritte and Dalí can be explained by the misbelief that Surrealism died in the 1960s after the death of Breton (Hopkins 2016; Löwy 2009). Bell (1983), cited in Suárez (2011), adds, "Contemporary Surrealism is not well defined, and certainly not well represented in museums and galleries, or in catalogs and books that have some credited circulation" (p. 740). Therefore, analysing and interpreting the paintings of Ishida is an opportunity to recognise the contemporary form of Surrealism, particularly in its worldly essence.

To conclude, the Surrealist genre features different artists with their individuals styles, symbols, and subjects. The diversity of representation in Surrealist art is one of the challenges to formulating a clear identity of Surrealism, just as there were problems earlier in the development of a Surrealist identity. Wechsler (1985:293) summarises:

> The vast quantity of art that includes imaginative, fantastic or odd imagery has provoked its often-intended confusion not only in the minds of viewers in general, but also in the minds of the art historians, who struggle to define it and categorise it. In the twentieth century, the most accepted historical categorisation of one aspect of such art is Surrealism. Yet a style that encompasses such widely-differing imagery as that of Magritte, Miró, Dalí, and Masson is certainly flexible as regards its boundaries.

Therefore, while flexibility may be an issue to the clarity of a Surrealist category of art, it is also a quality of its genre.

3.7 Summary

This chapter gives an overview of Surrealism as a social movement and as a genre of art. The purpose of this chapter is to establish to the reader that Surrealism is relevant to organisation studies. Surrealism is a significant area to research for two

reasons. First, as a social movement, Surrealism had a means to organise (e.g. publications) and organisations (e.g. Bureau). Second, as an art genre, Surrealism represents darkness and contradiction, which are important themes for examining organisational dystopia.

When discussing Surrealism as an art genre, it is important to establish that Tetsuya Ishida belongs in this genre. Although Ishida is a contemporary artist, his visual style links with the themes and techniques of early Surrealist artists, including Magritte and Dalí. Ishida is also a contemporary Surrealist artist given his similarity to George Tooker. While this is a brief analysis, it meets the need to establish Ishida's location within the Surrealist genre.

4. Methods

4.1 Introduction

Analysing and interpreting art is an underdeveloped research design in organisation studies (Bell and Davison 2013; Bell, Warren, and Schroeder 2014; Kunter and Bell 2006; Pink 2012; Stiles 2013). One reason why a methodology to analyse and interpret art for organisation study is not created is because paintings have been evaded in organisational research (see Chapter 2). Therefore, in order to examine paintings in a transparent and communicable way, this chapter sets forth a framework for analysing the Surrealist paintings by Tetsuya Ishida for organisational dystopia. Due to the specificity of the framework, this design is not a universal contribution. Nonetheless, it is a foundation to approach an interdisciplinary methodology for studying art and organisation studies.

A recent 'visual turn' within organisation studies increased the importance of the image as a source of organisational knowledge (e.g. Bell, Warren, and Schroeder 2014; Kunter and Bell 2006). An 'image' has a variety of different forms, including digital social media, photographs, advertisements and drawings (Bell and Davison 2013; Cohen, Hancock, and Tyler 2006; Stiles 2013). Therefore, the visual turn opens organisation studies to a diversity of images, including paintings. Previous methods to analyse images have used research participants to create their own image or analyse the image (e.g. Kunter and Bell 2006; Stiles 2013). This displaces the role of the researcher. Thus, the framework created in this chapter centres on the researcher as an active participant in knowledge analysis, as well as the researcher as interpreter of art.

As will be argued in this chapter, paintings are important data to examine for organisation studies. Since paintings include colour, composition, and shape which are visual elements that add to the understanding of organisations (Bell and Davison 2013). Furthermore, a painting is a material that represents the estrangement of reality; hence paintings are a way to examine the imagination within organisation studies (Buster and Crawford 2010; Pollock 1988; Roholt 2013). Due to the inclusion of the imagination, paintings are also sources to examine the criticism and contradiction of reality that is important to the Surrealist genre (Aspley 2010; Breton 1924; Waldberg 1965).

This chapter is an overview of the methodological position and design of this thesis. It also lays the groundwork for analysing and interpreting Surrealist art in the following chapters. The aim of this chapter is to make a contribution to organisation studies by presenting a way forward for interdisciplinary study to examine paintings.

4.2 A philosophy of art: ontology and epistemology

Art analysis and art interpretation are unexplored in organisation studies. To begin this conversation, I start with a discussion on ontology and epistemology. I start with the location of 'being' and 'knowledge' since paintings have different considerations to the ontology and epistemology than traditional empirical methods. In the following sections, I adopt an art-based ontology and epistemology in order to respect the data type of paintings.

4.2.1 Ontology

When considering ontology for paintings, I began by reflecting on questions such as, 'When is a painting a painting?' and 'How is a painting different from other types of culture forms, such as music or theatre?' When discussing the former, there are many ways to address painting (see Chapter 1). For example, is a painting an object, a practice, or mental image? Depending on the chosen ontology, either qualification is acceptable, and consequently limits what can be examined for an analysis of organisational dystopia.

An ontology of particulars states a painting is a painting due to its 'physical particulars' as a singular, tangible material (Rohrbaugh 2013). In contrast, an ontology of types claims that 'types' of art are categorised by the method of creation, artist intent, and context in which they are made (Levinson 2003). While ontological statuses have attempted to account for differences in art, from pantings to theatre shows, the two mentioned here are limited in their scope since they focus on practice and object. As a result, it is difficult to establish an epistemological position when there is not an opportunity to analyse message and meaning (Rohrbaugh 2013).

Since one of the connections between Surrealism, dystopia and CMS is imagination, the ontological position I take is one of imagination. In this sense the organisational dystopia is present on canvas, but also as a mental image to shock the observer. Hart (1968:259) explains the position of imagination:

> The art object is a potency, a call on imagination (that of the collaborating appreciator) produced by imagination (that of the artist), a thing inducing the movement of activated imagination in a certain tendency. But the art object *qua* stable existence is a merely necessary, not a sufficient, condition for the emergent being of the work of art.

In other words, the object of a painting is not enough to facilitate an understanding of organisational dystopia. The presence of an organisational dystopia requires first the extension of the artist's imagination to canvas, as well as the imagination of the observer to identify the essence of estrangement. This estrangement from reality is a necessity in order to reference the moments of organisational life as points of criticism. This ontology of imagination accounts for painting as an object as well as a mental image (Hart 1968; Roholt 2013; Thomasson 2006). This position is fitting to address Surrealist paintings since imagination is greatly valued by the Surrealists (e.g. Breton 1924, 1930).

A painting is different from other mediums of culture and art. One of the ways to explain why a painting is different from music or theatre is by ontology of instances. A 'singular instance' ontology claims an art form, like painting, exist as a singular object that is confined to a single place in time and space (Roholt 2013). For instance, the painting *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci resides at the Louvre in Paris, France. In order to observe this painting in its authentic instance, one must travel to Paris and visit the museum. In contrast, a 'multiple instances' ontology states is a type of art form, like opera, that exists in more than one instance within space and time (Davies 2003). For example, one can see the musical *Wicked* at theatres around with the world, performed in different languages and with different performers. Therefore, *Wicked* can be seen at many instances. In brief, the key difference between a singular instance and multiple instances is if the experience of the art form is a one-off instance or a repeated activity (Davies 2003).

Paintings are historically situated as a single instance ontology (e.g. Roholt 2013). However, due to technological advancements, paintings are visible in additional spaces outside of the gallery or museum. This could be the internet, a published book, or commercial products like postcards. It's important to account for this tension of a

singular instance or multiple instances ontology for a painting since I utilise the paintings by Tetsuya Ishida printed in the published collection *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (2010). I use this published resource as an accessible and economically viable way to observe Ishida's paintings. Otherwise, I would be unable to access his paintings for research as I am unable to afford the authentic originals. For example, Christie's (2017) auctioned off the painting *Can't fly Anymore* 2 (1996) for HKD 4,919,500 (price realised; or about 318,208.28 GBP) in May 2008. Using a published collection of Ishida's paintings is also a way to design a robust research project. Since I can view and review the published images whenever I need to. This is an important benefit in developing an analysis and interpretation in response to the research questions.

Using the published reproductions of Ishida's paintings does undermine the singular ontology. Since I am viewing the paintings frequently and in different forms (e.g. I scanned paintings to upload in this document, which changed the form and occupied space of a painting). This is an example of technology outpacing methods (Pink 2012), and is also an example of the consequences of art reproductions.

To speak on the consequences of reproductions, it is important to turn to the work of Walter Benjamin of the Frankfurt School. Benjamin (2008[1936]) remarked that art has an 'aura', which refers to the experience of contemplation and distance that comes from observing a singular, unique piece of art. Benjamin argued that technology has allowed for individuals to become closer to the object, and hence increase the accessibility of art. In consequence, the decrease of authenticity also corresponds to a reduction in aura. Benjamin (2008[1936]:23, emphasis in original), elucidated:

> What, then, is the aura? A strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be. … we can readily grasp the social basis of the aura's present decay. It rests on two circumstances, both linked to the increasing emergence of the masses and the growing intensity of their movements. Namely: *the desire of the present-day masses to "get closer" to things, and their equally passionate concern for overcoming each thing's uniqueness [Überwindung des Einmaligen jeder Gegebenheit] by assimilating it as a reproduction.* Every day the urge

> grows stronger to get hold of an object at close range in an image [*Bild*], or, better, in a facsimile [*Abbild*], a reproduction. And the reproduction [*Reproduktion*], as offered by illustrated magazines and newsreels, differs unmistakably from the image.

Hence, there is a distinction between the authentic, original paintings by Ishida and the reproduced published collection. However, the using of reproduced images in collection *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (2010) has a different quality than the mass communications that Benjamin (2008[1936]) used as examples of a loss of aura. For instance, *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (2010) is published by Kyuryudo, which is a publishing house that has been focused on art books and Japanese artists since its opening 1923 (Kyuryudo 2017). Thus, the published collection is not as accessible as the mass communications of news or magazines since it is not produced on a global scale and has a limited audience. In addressing Benjamin and an ontology of instances, this thesis has set a precedent for re-examining the text by critical theorists on art through a lens of contemporary research design on paintings.

In sum, this thesis uses an ontological position of imagination in order to reach the imaginative quality of organisational dystopia. This ontological position accounts for the object of a painting as well as the mental image. This allows for an analysis of the shock via contradiction that is enabled by an estrangement of reality. Further, this research acknowledges a conflict of ontology in using reproduced images. Nonetheless, reproduced images are used in order to support a robust research analysis and interpretation.

4.2.2 Epistemology

When addressing an epistemology for paintings, I originated this discussion on two questions: ‘What can a painting tell us about organisational dystopia?’ and ‘How do I draw on the representation of organisational dystopia as knowledge?’ To answer these questions, I turn to visual epistemology. The field of ‘visual epistemology’ is a growing area of philosophy concerned with images, like paintings (Klink 2014) and the legitimation of those images as a source of knowledge (Novitz 2002). This includes paintings as a source of knowledge about eras, people, places, and events (Briesen 2014; Kieran and Lopes 2007).

Before identifying an epistemological position, it is important to recognise that there are three types of knowledge to learn from paintings: objective knowledge, practical knowledge and propositional knowledge.

Objective knowledge is factual knowledge. This includes knowledge of who is the artist, when the painting was created, and the materials of the painting. *Practical knowledge* is knowledge about how the painting is created. Both of objective and practical knowledge are straight-forward and factual. Yet *propositional knowledge* is knowledge that is less factual and more 'true' or 'justified'. Interpretations of art concerning the meaning or message of a painting is propositional knowledge. Propositional knowledge is problematic since it is difficult to claim a universal or factual meaning about a painting. This is because the imaginative element of art is subjective to the imagination of the observer and artist; due to the difference of individual experience and knowledge, this can lead to contention of interpretation (Briesen 2014; Kieran and Lopes 2007; Sontag 1965).

Since interpretations are contentious, some have argued that art is not about knowledge. Rather, art is about understanding. Understanding is the communication of why a truth "could" exist (Stecker 2002:167). Such a position is related to a postmodern idea of knowledge since knowledge exists in grand narratives as social constructions (Butler 2002). When adopting a position of understanding, this also opens a discussion to different ways of knowing (e.g. Clarke 2005; de Quincey 2005; Moses and Knutsen 2007). Since in recognition of the construction of knowledge, there is also acknowledgement in the construction of 'appropriate' methods of knowledge creation.

Paintings are a way to understand organisational dystopia, and paintings are an alternative to traditional research methods. Since paintings are a vessel to examine imagination, paintings are an opportunity to reframe the methods in which knowledge or understanding about organisations are derived. Therefore, paintings are a way to open organisation studies to different types of knowing about organisations, such as imagination (de Quincey 2005).

Following an epistemological position of understanding, this influences the type of knowledge that can be understood by interpreting paintings. Next, it is important to consider the number of interpretations relevant to learning about organisational dystopia. There are two epistemological positions. One position is

‘critical singularism’, which states there is only one ‘most correct’ interpretation; the second position is ‘critical multiplism’, which claims there are more than one ‘most correct' interpretations (Krausz 2010; Stecker 2002). This debate concerns whether there is one understanding or multiple understandings about organisational dystopia. In remaining consistent with the underpinnings of this thesis, I adopt a critical multiplist epistemology in order to acknowledge the possibility of multiple interpretations.

Multiple interpretations are possible due to the alteration or addition of variables for considering a painting. A ‘variable’ refers to an area of research interest, a precondition to interpretation, or quality of context that can influence the interpretation. Variables are not exhaustive; instead, variables are defined based on the scope of research. Given the variety of research aims, there is a possibility for diverse interpretations, or understandings about an organisational dystopia, particularly if a researcher examines alternative sets of paintings or responds to different research questions.

One of the variables I had trouble with was locating information on Tetsuya Ishida. Of the information accessible about Ishida, most of it is written in Japanese. Given that the majority of this little information on Ishida is translated, then it is difficult to make interpretations based extensively on the artist’s personal background. Another variable that I exclude is the financial valuation of Ishida’s art or its extensive influence in culture. For example, I exclude additional information for interpretation such as the reference to Ishida’s paintings in a fashion editorial in Vogue Italy (Casadio 2015). This latter information is excluded as was not deemed relevant to understanding organisational dystopia.

In accepting that there can be multiple interpretations given different variables to analysis and interpretation, then it is important to acknowledge how my interpretation of Ishida's art can be privileged as an understanding on organisational dystopia. A particular interpretation can be privileged based on its persuasiveness and appropriateness in response to the research question. I reflect on the privileging of one interpretation over another more deeply later in this chapter.

Overall, this thesis takes an epistemological position of understanding. In addition, the use of paintings for understanding organisational dystopia is one way to

upend the traditional approaches to knowledge creation. Therefore, paintings are one way to engender discussion on alternative ways of knowing about organisations.

4.3 An approach for form and content

The framework I created to analyse the Surrealist paintings by Tetsuya Ishida are based on two approaches: form and content. A written framework is a contribution to the field since previously formal methods to form and content remain unarticulated. This is because frameworks can close and limit the imagination to conceive of varied interpretations (Sontag 1964).

A formal approach to paintings "emphasises the skill of the artist and the expression of this skill in the individual work of art. Under formalism, technical merit takes precedence over the subject of study" (Kidd 2014:54). Formalism is a 'modern approach' since it focuses on the perfection of artistic technique (Buster and Crawford 2010). Following the idea of a perfect artistic method, a formal approach assumes an objectivist position (Bell 1914). The formalist approach involves an analysis of a painting's visible elements, such as line, light, colour, pattern, shape, and movement. One can also address the factual, objective knowledge of a painting as information about form, such as the material of the painting (Lazzari and Schlesier 2012). However, this objective knowledge is limited to information about the painting as object. Hence the formalist approach constrains the variables for answering questions on organisational dystopia. Since formalism focuses on the object of a painting, formalism alone is not appropriate for discussing a dystopia, which resides in imagination. Nonetheless, formalism is an appropriate first step to the framework in order to move into the imagination since the imagination first requires an acknowledgement of reality (i.e. the painting as object) for reference (Hart 1968). Formalism is also a way to address the visual elements of a painting for the observer to follow when verifying the interpretations of Ishida's paintings written in the following chapters.

Formalism is also important as a way to identify different types of art by style. Alfred Barr, the first Director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, attended to such styles in order to formally categorise art movements (see Image 9). For example, Surrealism is categorised as an abstract movement of art, referring to the

imaginative and representative qualities of the paintings, preceded by movements such as Dada.

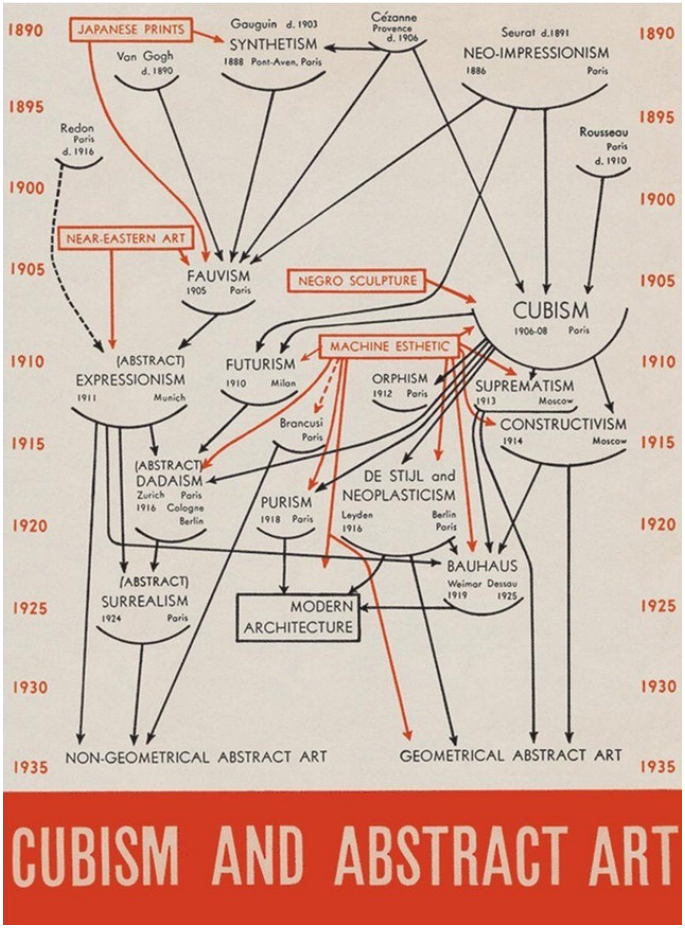

Image 9. Alfred Barr's *Cubism and Abstract Art* (1936)

I construct my own framework for addressing the form in Ishida's Surrealist paintings on organisational dystopia (see Figure 2). This figure is inspired by Buster and Crawford's (2010) "Formal Matters in Painting Checklist", which is three pages of sample questions to ask about the material object and the arrangement of visual elements. Using this as a guideline, I produced my own framework relevant to my specific research inquiry and data. This formwork is a guide to analyse form in three categories: subject (persons), object, and environment. For example, I stress the difference between the representation of a person versus an object since Ishida is known for synthesising the salaryman's body with object (Horikiri 2010) in order to later discuss the visualisation of objectification as a quality of organisational dystopia (see Chapter 7).

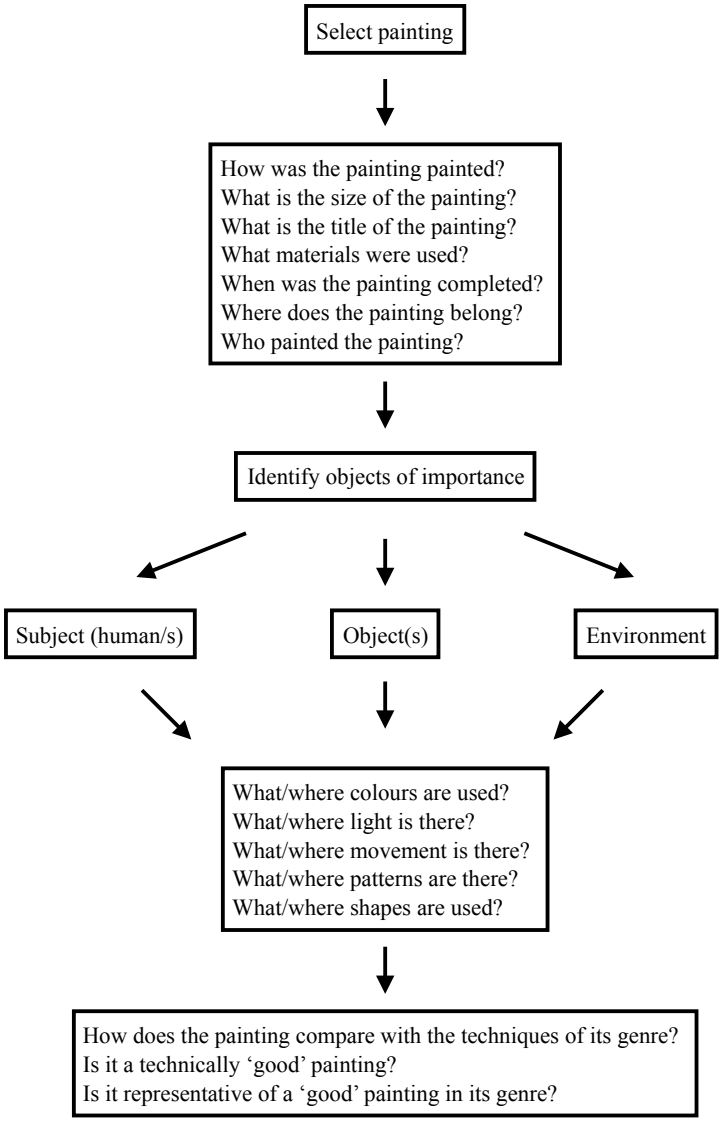

Figure 2. Framework for formal approach

Since the formalist approach is concerned with the perfection of artistic technique, the final box of the formalist approach includes questions like 'Is it a technically 'good' painting?' and 'Is it [the painting] representative of a 'good' painting in its genre?'. These questions point to the aim of formalist approach which is to assess 'good' art (Lazzari and Schlesier 2012). When examining good art, the purpose of the formalist approach is to appreciate the subject of a painting rather than to learn about the subject of the painting (Kidd 2014). While these questions to 'goodness' are included in this framework here, they are removed in the next framework since the aim of this research is not to appreciate the Surrealist paintings

by Ishida. Instead, the aim of this thesis is to examine the representation of organisational dystopia in order to identify the qualities and themes of organisational dystopia.

Therefore, in order to understand organisational dystopia, this research requires a framework for content. Content is a term used by such art scholars as Buster and Crawford (2010) to indicate that paintings have meaning and message. Paintings are argued to have content since they are images of communication (Lazzari and Schlesier 2012; Roholt 2013). Although a content approach is delineated from form, content is informed by an analysis of form. This is because prior to interpreting the meaning of a painting, an observer must first 'see' the visual elements of the image (Buster and Crawford 2010; Panofsky 1955; Roholt 2013). These elements are translated into symbols, metaphors and meaning through an analysis of how these pictorial elements are organised in relation to each other and relate to reality.

In order to assess a painting for meaning and symbolism, it is important to consider external information. External information is information that exists 'outside' of the painting as an object; this includes information about the author and the context in which the painting was created (Buster and Crawford 2010). External information also includes art criticism, since this information aids in the formation of a persuasive interpretation (Krausz 2002).

Krippendorff (2004), in his introduction to content analysis, remarks, "Virtually all disciplines within the whole spectrum of the humanities and the social sciences, including those that seek to improve the political and social conditions of life, are concerned with the functions and effects of symbols, meanings and messages" (p. xvii). Hence it is relevant to discuss content when bringing the humanities to organisation studies (Czarniawska 2016; Czarniawska-Joerges 2006). Barrett (1994, 2000) adds that content is important since art depicts a contextually rich reference for individual experiences. Paintings also represent "the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion…condensed into one work" (Panofsky 1955:140). Therefore, content is important to CMS since it is a way to share individual experiences that may be marginalised or silenced in academic research. For example, Ishida's paintings draw attention to Japanese salarymen, who often go unnoticed in academic research (Matanle, McCann and Ashmore 2008).

To my knowledge, there is no articulated approach for content analysis. One reason is that a written framework limits the scope of imagination in conceiving of meaning (Buster and Crawford 2010; Davies 2016). However, in order to create a thesis that is transparent and verifiable, I devise my own framework for a content approach (see Figure 3). This approach is based on the work by art critics, philosophers and scholars including Bennett (1995), Buster and Crawford (2010), Duncan (1994), Krippendorff (2004), Lazzari and Schleiser (2012), and Roholt (2013).

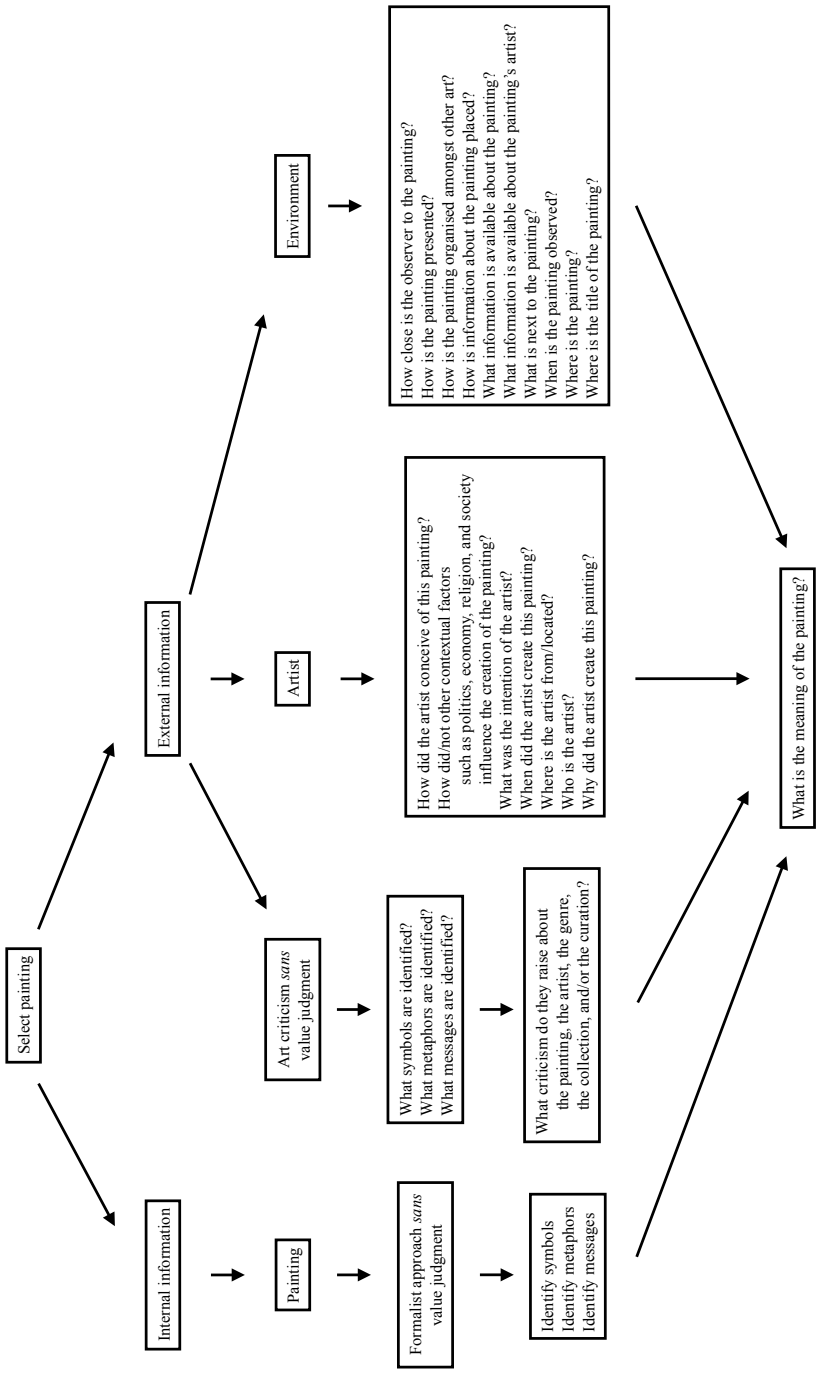

Figure 3. Framework for content approach

This articulated framework is a means to reach interpretation. Interpretation, as discussed in the next section, is the transition of the identified symbols and meanings of a painting's content into an understanding of a subject, such as organisational dystopia. Thus an approach to content is necessary in order to move from the painting as object to the analysis of the imagination.

4.4 A method for interpretation

The approaches for form and content are prior stages to interpretation since their analysis provides information about the painting as an object and about the painting's meaning (Acton 1997; Baden and Wimpenny 2014; Davies 2016). This information is needed to generate an interpretation, which is required to produce a response to the research questions. Interpretation has been defined both as translation (Sontag 1964) and an argument (Barrett 1994), and it is also recognised by Danto (1981) as an ontological feature of art. Interpretation remains an unarticulated method since the movement from meaning to understanding requires a freedom to imagine (Barrett 1994, 2000). Language and frameworks constrain a visual imagination since they are systems with their own rationalities (Barrett 1994, 2000; Buster and Crawford 2010; Sontag 1964), and may misleadingly suggest that interpretation is an objective practice (Geahigan 1975).

However, an articulated method for interpretation is a necessary step towards understanding the qualities and themes of organisational dystopia. This articulated method provides transparency, accountability and verifiability to the interpretations made in this thesis. I created a particular framework for interpretation specific to a thesis on Surrealist art and organisational dystopia (see Figure 4). This framework is influenced by Barrett's (1994, 2000) "Principles for Interpreting Art." Barrett's (1994, 2000) principles also follow an epistemological position of critical multiplism. For example, Barrett (1994, 2000) argues that some interpretations are stronger due to their persuasiveness. He also refrains from simplifying the interpretive process into an articulated method for the sake of management.

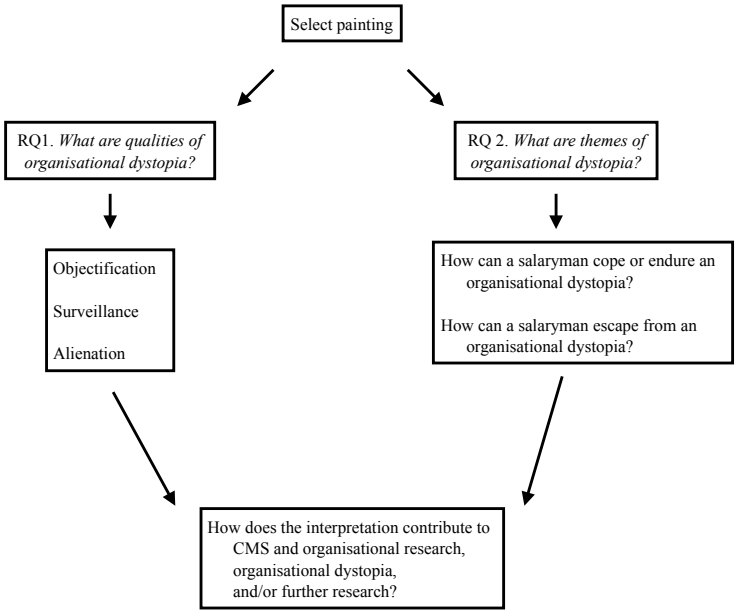

Figure 4. Framework for interpretation

Interpretation is a response to research questions (Baden and Wimpenny 2014; Daichendt 2011). Therefore, my framework for interpretation is centred on my two research questions: *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* and *What are themes of organisational dystopia?* The framework is iterative as it became more specific the further I analysed the form and content of Ishida's paintings. For instance, there are three qualities I identify in Ishida's paintings: objectification, surveillance, and alienation. And I focus on themes of organisational dystopia as they relate to the paradox of dystopia, notably the hopelessness (enduring) or hopefulness (escaping) of dystopia.

The problem of interpretation is best summarised by Sue Latimer, Senior Education and Accessor Curator at Glasgow Museums. She states (2001): "There has been little real debate about the content of art interpretation … But there is also a lack of critical thought: plenty of criticism, but no clear philosophy of what a traditional approach to art interpretation is delivering and to whom" (p. 73). In response to this, my framework for interpretation is intended to be received by CMS and organisational scholars as a way to verify and account for my assessment of the Surrealist paintings by Tetsuya Ishida for organisational dystopia. In consequence, this thesis is concerned

not only with contribution to knowledge and practice, but also methodology (Wray-Bliss 2004).

The purpose of interpretation is to contribute an understanding of organisational dystopia to organisational scholarship and CMS. By drawing on the imagination as well as content and form, interpretation offers the researcher freedom to think, feel, react and reflect on paintings, and then to present this interpretation through language to be shared and discussed.

4.4.1 Communal understanding

In critical multiplism, one way to increase the persuasiveness of the interpretation is to account for other interpretations, such as those by art critics or art curators. This is an important part of 'communal understanding', which is one of Barrett's (1994, 2000) "Principles for Interpreting Art". Communal understanding "is an understanding or explanation of a work of art that is held by a group of individuals with shared interests" (Barrett 1994, 2000:8). Hence persuasiveness is increased when shared interpretations are held.

Communal understanding requires interpreters to share their understandings and interpretations. This does not mean art interpretation is 'group work'; rather, interpretation is a continuous process of evaluation that can be supported and challenged by group understanding. An important part of this research process was presenting my research and interpretations to peers, supervisors, and colleagues. This dialogue was important for structuring a robust thesis on the topic of organisational dystopia. For instance, at the 2015 European Group for Organisation Studies Conference in Athens, a discussion with my stream convenors encouraged my dissertation to account for the relationship of contemporary Surrealism to early Surrealism (see Chapter 3). My Japanese peers and colleagues were helpful in providing contextual experience to understanding cultural references and symbolism in Ishida's paintings. For example, the dreaming man at his desk in *Mobility Dream* (1996) is in a state of 'inemuri', which is a practice of 'fake sleeping' at work (Bulkeley 2016; Williams 2005). Inemuri is not considered organisational misbehaviour in Japan; rather, it is a sign of accomplishment since salarymen are working so hard that they need to sleep on the job (Bulkeley 2016; Williams 2005).

Thus communal understanding is important to the process of interpretation in order to ensure that interpretations are relevant, acceptable, persuasive, and credible (Barrett 1994, 2000; Freeland 2001).

4.5 Paintings as a unique source and method for organisational research

A method of analysis and interpretation of paintings goes through three stages: form, content and interpretation. I created a framework for attending to form, content, and interpretation when assessing the Surrealist paintings by Tetsuya Ishida for the qualities and themes of organisational dystopia. In this section I reflect on how this framework contributes to organisational scholarship and discuss possibilities for future use.

A method for analysing and interpreting paintings is a unique research design for organisational scholarship, especially since it is an opportunity to study imagination. The imagination is present in two ways: first, paintings have imaginative elements as they are devised through representation, which an estrangement from reality (Pollock 1988; Roholt 2013). Second, the understanding of paintings requires the observer to use their imagination so as to accept that the imagination is present in the painting's representation (Hart 1968).

Addressing paintings as research data is also different from traditional research methods that rely on the spoken or written word. One way to explain the difference between research methods that rely on language versus the use of paintings is the distinction between depiction and description. Description is the use of language properties, such as signs, to represent reality through words; whereas depiction is the use of pictorial properties, to represent reality through images (Danto 1981; Goodman 1968). Of course, this distinction is not absolute as some paintings do include signs (i.e. text) in the image. Nonetheless, the reference point for imagination is different in that it either relies on a word or visual element, which can result in contrasting interpretations of meaning in the data. Zemach (1975) explains, "Reading a description is a one-step process, while seeing a depiction as such involves two steps" (p. 575). Depiction requires a 'visual adjustment' to recognise that the painting depicts reality before analysis of meaning can be taken place; hence the use of form and content prior to establishing an interpretation.

Paintings are also different from empirical research methods that rely on observation. For example, paintings are different from ethnography. Paintings and ethnography are similar in a sociological sense, in that both can study people, events and culture (Daichendt 2011; Fetterman 2010; Pink 2013). Yet, how one uses a painting or ethnography to research subjects is mediated by a different relationship with reality. While a painting exhibits an understanding about a concept based on a reference to reality (i.e. representation), ethnography consists of a record of observations in empirical reality (Fetterman 2010; Pink 2013). Thus, paintings can access the imagination, which is internal (hidden) to an artist, whereas ethnography addresses an empirical case as part of the external experience of organisational life.

The relation to reality is also a reason why paintings are different from other types of images, such as photographs. This difference is described in the following quotes:

> Yet the difference between paintings and photographs is more than the difference between those visible and intelligible physical differences, paint and emulsion. The essential difference is that the photograph has the causal connection with the world of objects that allows it to hold in fixed form the piece of the world a photographer chooses and also restricts him to such a piece of the world. (Price 1994:6)

> A photograph gives evidence of what it depicts and gives presence to what has been. It is a documentary image as a painting can never be, not because it is necessarily more realistic than a painting but because it has a necessary material connection with reality. What a photograph depicts has been; what a painting depicts comes into being in the picture. (Perez 1998:34)

These quotes acknowledge that paintings and photographs differ due to their contrasting reference to reality. While a photograph is tied to the empirical substance of reality, a painting is free to imagine and estrange from reality. Hence, the 'fiction' in a photograph is a falseness to the image (e.g. constructed placement of objects or use of editing), whereas the 'fiction' of a painting is representation and use of imagination.

In addition, the relation to time is different when comparing a painting and a photograph. Perez (1998) notes that a moment captured by a photograph is of something in the past: what was photographed is no longer present. Whereas a painting may represent something in the past, present, or future depending on the position of the observer's imagination (Zemach 1975). Hence it is possible to conceive of a future organisational dystopia when observing paintings.

Drawing on the arguments presented in this section, paintings are a unique and interesting source for accessing the imagination. The route to investigate the imagination is a new route for organisation studies to consider as a different way of knowing. In addition, paintings are an alternative source of data and research design in comparison to traditional research practices.

4.6 Research data

In this section I discuss the research data I use to examine organisational dystopia. I used *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (2010), which is the published collection of Ishida's reproduced works, to identify paintings relevant to the topic of organisational dystopia. Initially, I identified 32 relevant paintings before specifying to 19 paintings. These 19 paintings are the data investigated for form, content, and interpretation.

Prior to reaching these 19 paintings, I first viewed the published collection on five separate occasions. After viewing the paintings, I began to focus on a series of qualifications in order to discriminate and select paintings that refer to organisational dystopia. The qualifications I designed are:

1. *The painting's subject is a Japanese salaryman.* To identify a salaryman, I focused on a work uniform: a suit, usually paired with a tie and Oxford shoes. This disqualified a large number of Ishida's later paintings, which focus on family relations and children. This was the first quality I use since the subject of Japanese salarymen eases the identification of a painting as 'about' work. This quality also helped clarify to my peers, supervisors, and colleagues that paintings are 'about' organisational dystopia.

2. *There are no distinguishing personal features of the Japanese salaryman.* After identifying paintings about salarymen, the next quality to exclude irrelevant

paintings was if the Japanese salaryman had distinguishing personal features, such as tattoos, moustaches or scars. The reason for excluding salarymen with these distinguishing features is because they signify a position of authority, such as of the corporate bosses in *Toyota Ipsum* (1996) by Tetsuya Ishida. There are not enough paintings by Ishida to discuss salarymen in positions of power, and also, it would detract from a cohesive interpretation about the general salaryman as powerless within their organisational dystopia. Further, if a salaryman had distinguishing features, then it was not an ambitious self-portrait of Ishida; which meant that it differentiated from one of the Surrealist themes in art (see Chapter 3).

3. *The painting depicts an organisational setting*. This could be in the representation of a desk or keyboard, for example. This is not a quality that is required for all the paintings analysed and interpreted in this dissertation; however, it is an important quality as it eases the observer into acknowledging that the painting is about organisations.

4. *The title alludes to organisational life*. I included this qualification in order to ensure that paintings are about organisations even when the organisational setting is not clear.

5. *The painting has comparative features to another painting in the collection.* After identifying the 32 paintings that are relevant to discussing organisational dystopia, I removed paintings that did not have a clear connection to organisational life. In addition, I removed paintings from the final list of 19 that did not have a painting for comparison, whether by theme or subject. It was important to establish comparisons early on since comparison is a useful analytical tool for identifying themes.

Following analysis of form and content of 32 paintings, these were grouped by themes. This grouping is visible in the structure of the following two chapters. For example, I identify comparisons in representing hierarchy and objectification (see Chapter 5), dreaming (see Chapter 6), and private places of 'refuge' (see Chapter 6), and the depiction of movement as escape (see Chapter 6). One section that does not

conform to a comparison of paintings is on the process of salarymen objectification (see Chapter 5). Unlike other sections, these paintings are observed as a process of examination, assessment, and packaging of the worker as an organisational object. I identified this narrative while reading Townley's (1993) Foucauldian analysis of Human Resource Management (HRM). She describes HRM as a process of rendering a worker an object of knowledge. Hence, this notion influenced my imagination in constructing a sequence of paintings that refer to a process of objectification in organisational dystopia.

I sent a request for permission to use these 32 paintings in this thesis. I sent my first message to the official website for Tetsuya Ishida for permission to use his images in 2014. I received no response, so I messaged again three months later. I again received no response. So in late 2016 I messaged an official Facebook page for Tetsuya Ishida called 石田徹也展実行委員会 ('Tetsuya Ishida Exhibition Executive (Committee)'). I sent a personal message to the controller of the webpage on November 11, 2016, seeking information about how to contact the owners of Ishida's collection for permission in use of images. A day later I received a response from Michiaki Ishida of TETSU Inc. with an email address to contact.

In my email correspondence with Michiaki Ishida I received permission to use selected paintings from Ishida's published collection for this thesis on February 8, 2017 (see Appendix A). From the list of acceptable paintings, I specified to 19 paintings for analysis based on what paintings were available for comparison. Paintings were scanned from *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (2010) and placed into this research document. Unfortunately, some paintings were not approved for reproduction; therefore, I provide a web link for the reader to view the painting.

4.7 Sample method in practice

This section is a sample analysis and interpretation of a painting by Ishida in order to prepare the reader for the following chapters. I use this opportunity to explore a painting called *Management* (1999). *Management* (1999, no. 89 in printed collection) does not fit with the qualifications for studying organisational dystopia, since the painting's subject is not a salaryman. However, the title of 'management' suggests there is a relevance to organisation studies and CMS.

Image 10. *Management* (1999)

In *Management* (1999), there are two visual subjects. The first, resting his head in the foreground, is a man lying on his back in the grass. He is wearing a grey shirt and black trousers with a grey stripe along the side. His arms are crossed, and in his left hand between the index and middle finger is a lit cigarette. Instead of a human mouth is the gap of a soda can with an enlarged metal pull tab. On either side of this opening are two cigarette butts. The second subject is a white dog wearing a grey collar, which matches the colour of the smoking man's shirt. The collar is attached to a white rope which the man holds in the pinkie finger of his left hand. The dog's mouth is enclosed by a black muzzle. The dog is sitting upright with his head above the man's head. In front of the dog is a plastic bag of dog poop.

There are two significant themes in this painting that are recognisable in Ishida's oeuvre. First is the repetition of the male subject, which is an ambiguous self-portrait of Ishida (Yokoyama 2010). Second is the synthesis of the body with an object (Horikiri 2010), such as the gap of a soda can top that replaced an open mouth. Horikiri (2010) suggests the ambiguity of the self-portrait is a mark of collective alienation, in which all individuals have been rendered the same due to alienation. These themes are identified by the Japanese art critics and curators as Surrealist

representations of contradiction in the synthesis of object and body (Alden 1999; Balakian 1986).

A visual comparison between the man and the dog reveals a difference in height. This difference may signify asymmetric power relations, such as the informal posture of the man lying on the grass in contrast to the erect formality of the animal's body. The muzzle on the dog prevents his ability to communicate with the man, which is another relationship between person and pet.

The quality of a soda can mouth is part of the "bizarre wit" of Ishida's paintings that "actively resists easy explanation" (Asian Art Museum 2017; Thibault 2014). The humorous reflection on 'waste' in a figurative and literal sense refer to the 'waste' of communication. The dark humour is quality similar to the Surrealists (Waldberg 1965).

This painting can be understood in learning about Ishida the person. Ishida was critical of Japanese society's reliance on technology and materialism that grew in the 1990s as this contributed to a breakdown in relationships (Yokoyama 2010). This painting shows a breakdown in a relationship with the self in the depiction of the man's mouth as a waste disposal for cigarettes. This self-harm suggests a 'waste' of a communicative ability, and this is also supported in the organisation of the painting in which the man's head is on the same level as dog poop (i.e. 'waste').

Ishida, cited in Ocula (2017), wrote, "One characteristic of Japanese psychology is the idea that all Japanese people understand each other." Since Japanese salarymen are assumed to be the same type of person. Ishida painted what it felt like to be isolated as an individual amongst a society of sameness (Horikiri 2010; Ocula 2017). It can be isolating to not speak. Hence the lack of communication signified by 'waste' gives a sense of despair in a darkly humorous representation of self-repression (Thibault 2014).

Following this analysis of form and content, this painting is about organisations. Therefore, one interpretation of this painting is relative to management. In his opening of *Against Management,* Parker (2002a) considers the plurality of management, "It would seem then that management, as person, practice and discipline, is almost everywhere nowadays…It is altering the language we use in our conceptions of home, work and self" (p. 9). When interpreting this painting for understanding management, the alienation from society and the despair in being unable to articulate

loneliness is a sadness of management. For instance, the management of self-silence and the silencing of others is a practice 'wasteful' of communication. Thus, this painting is a way to understand management as directed silence.

I would like to point out that this sample differs from the analysis and interpretation in the following two chapters about organisational dystopia in one important way. In the next chapters, I build on analysis and interpretation by referring to additional paintings by theme and grouping. Hence the strength of its argument is limited to a degree of consensus with art critics, curators and organisational literature on a single painting.

4.8 Limitations and challenges

In this chapter I present a framework for analysing and interpreting Surrealist paintings for organisational dystopia. This is an important contribution for expanding the repertoire of research designs in organisation studies, as well as supporting the opportunity to engage with different ways of knowing. However, this framework and research design is not without limitations and challenges, which I address in this section.

First, advancing technology outpacing methodological understanding requires further discussion (Pink 2012; Davies 2003). The consequences of reproductions raised by Benjamin (2008) of the Frankfurt School requires further conversation, particularly into the consequences of reproductions of high art. Since reproductions of high art do not necessarily follow the same mechanisms of mass production. Instead, the specialisation and valuation of high art images requires a nuanced understanding that, to my knowledge, has yet to be addressed by art philosophers or academic researchers.

Second, multiple interpretations challenges the generalisability of art interpretation. At a cost to generalisability, multiple interpretations allows for context-based interpretations that respond to specific research questions. This means that interpretations of paintings are a continuous conversation of new understandings in response to new research questions. This also means that there are further opportunities to discuss qualities and themes of organisational dystopia.

Third, interpretation is heavily influenced by the personal experiences and knowledge of the observer (Roholt 2013). As a result, interpretations are biased to the

experiences and knowledges of the researcher. In order to overcome individual imaginative constraints, it is vital for the researcher to formulate a robust interpretation by addressing other interpretations and external information.

Fourth, accessibility of paintings is a concern for research. Accessibility is a common struggle in visual methodologies (Bell and Davison 2013; Stiles 2013) since researchers require ethical approval for image use and publication (Clark 2012). This can also be a lengthy process; for example, I did not receive a response until a year after I had begun communicating with the organisation holding Ishida's paintings. Moreover, not all images are approved for use. For this reason, I have been unable to include the images of three paintings that I have analysed and interpreted in this thesis. Therefore, in order to explain to the reader my analysis of an absent painting, it is important to be detailed in the description of form so as to give the audience an idea of what the work depicts and what it is about. As well as provide web links for the reader to use in order to observe the painting online.

A final consideration is the application of my created framework. Due to a lack of articulated frameworks to assess form, content and interpretation, I devised my own so as to communicate the process I use in examining the paintings by Ishida. This provides a sense of transparency to how I reached an understanding of organisational dystopia. However, this method was devised specifically to respond to questions about organisational dystopia through the evaluation of contemporary Surrealist paintings. Hence, the method I have constructed does not have a universal or general application. Organisational scholars and CMS academics will require a different framework devised for their specific artist, genre of art and research questions, since this will influence how the researcher examines the painting and what outside information they account for. Instead, my constructed methodology may serve as an inspiration for researchers to use when designing their own methods for analysing and interpreting paintings.

The five points raised in this section are relevant to this study in that they communicate limitations and challenges to examining paintings as research data. These five issues are important to consider in awareness of the shortcomings of working with Surrealist paintings and the imagination. However, they are also a foundation to further discuss a future for paintings as an interdisciplinary method for organisation studies.

4.9 Summary

Paintings are a way to access the imagination and are an alternative to traditional research methods in organisation studies. Hence, this thesis seeks to break ground in discussions on different ways of knowing in organisation studies. One way to start this conversation is the framework I created to acknowledge form, content, and interpretation in analysing the paintings by Ishida for organisational dystopia. This framework allows readers to follow the process of developing an understanding of qualities of organisational dystopia and themes of organisational dystopia.

Paintings are a significant opportunity to expand the field of CMS beyond popular culture to alternative forms of culture. As well as an interdisciplinary method for organisation studies. Since paintings are a way of reviewing, revising and renewing what is understood about organisations.

5. Qualities of organisational dystopia

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is structured in response to the first research question, *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* In the literature review (Chapter 2), qualities of dystopia that exist in literature include struggles of identity, including subjectivity, power relations, and alienation (Hillegas 1967; Snodgrass 1996; Stableford 2010; Zamyatin 1922). Practices like surveillance (e.g. panopticon) and of knowledge-gathering (e.g. interviews) are contributors to qualities of organisational dystopia, in which salarymen are objectified (Foucault 1995; Townley 1993). The quality of alienation stems from a sensitivity to Marx, who recognised alienation as a feature of a labour crisis: a threat to humanity when workers lose control and ownership of their creation (Marx 2007[1844]; Wallimann 1981). The criticisms of factory labour made by Marx (2007[1844]) feature in Ishida's paintings in which contemporary organisations make reference to this historical type of labour.

This chapter is influenced by Knights and Willmott (1989), Grant and Shields (2010), Clegg and Courpasson (2007) and Costas and Fleming (2009). These academics present a criticism of real organisations, yet do not consider the potential of organisations to reach extreme conditions. These extreme conditions are accessible by studying the imagination. For instance, while a panopticon may be a “perverse dream”, the notions of surveillance, control, domination and alienation have a dark presence in organisational life via imagination; and when that imagination is depicted on canvas, the representation is an organisational dystopia of what ‘could’ be (Foucault 1995:225). This expression of possibility is further supported in that the imagination is an estrangement from reality; hence, the painting is not fully unreal or impossible (Pollock 1988). It is important to explore the possibility of organisational dystopia since this raises criticism on the trajectory of organisational progress.

In order to understand organisational dystopia, this chapter analyses and interprets two sets of curated paintings taken from Ishida’s oeuvre in order to identify qualities of this dystopian category. The first collection addresses a salaryman entering the organisation, and the salaryman is then examined and packaged by the organisation as an object of work. This section is curated as a story in which an individual enters and becomes part of the organisation. The second collection is a comparison between

workers and supervisors in an organisational dystopia. By focusing on differences in hierarchy (i.e. worker versus manager), I interpret that salarymen, even in different positions of responsibility and power, face a collective objectification. This objectification is a central quality to organisational dystopia that is discussed in Chapter 7.

5.2 Worker objectification and alienation

Following an early ‘reading’ of Ishida’s collection, I saw the paintings as a story. At the time, I was reading Townley’s (1993) analysis of human resource management as an accumulation of mechanisms and techniques that render a worker a subject of knowledge: “registration, assessment and classification” (p. 541). Drawing inspiration from this article, I imagined a similar narrative in Ishida's paintings. However, due to continued symbolism in synthesising the human body and object (Horikiri 2010), I interpret Ishida's paintings as a darker criticism of management. In organisational dystopia, workers are not rendered subjects; instead, workers are rendered objects. This is key to identifying one of the qualities of organisational dystopia: objectification. When workers are objectified, these salarymen do not have a ‘force' of power; instead, salarymen who are objectified are treated as ‘functions' of an organisation (Xamou Art 2012). For instance, Foucault (1995) identified the labour subject as “a force of production” (p. 26); instead, the objectified salaryman is depicted as a ‘function of production’.

Following the steps of “registration, assessment and classification” (Townley 1993:541), this section is curated by ‘interview (selection)’, ‘test (assessment)’, and ‘package (ready for work)’.

5.2.1 Interview (selection)

The Japanese salaryman enters the organisation and meets its members in an interview. Interviews are a process of selection and examination in order to 'register' and ‘identify' individuals for work (Townley 1993). In Ishida’s representation of an interview, the examination of the individual is a means to complete the objectification of the salaryman.

Interview (1998, number 68 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (2010); see Image 11) depicts a salaryman in a room facing three interviewers. Sitting in the foreground

among a row of aluminium chairs is a salaryman with his hands resting on his lap as he anxiously gazes at his interviewers. This anxious gaze is reflected to the review by the mirrors at the base of the interviewers.

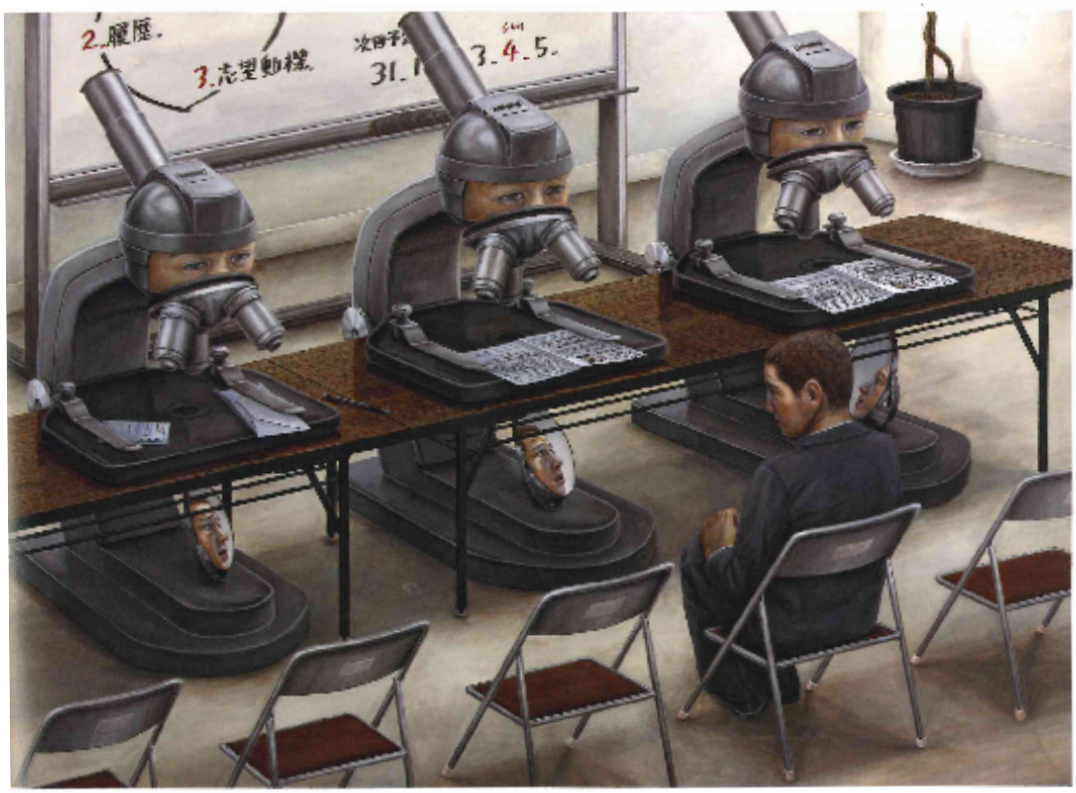

Image 11. *Interview* (1998)

The three interviewers are each depicted in the 'body' of a silver microscope. The microscope mimics the posture of a human body at a table. For example, the clips of the microscopes hold documents in front of them, similar to the way human arms hold on to an envelope and paperwork. Next to one of the microscope clips is a pen for taking notes. The three microscopes has a gap to show human eyes, which are the only observable human parts of the interviewers. This may suggest that the interviewers are not fully transformed into organisational objects; or it may be a visual component to encourage an observer to imagine what is underneath the metal skin of the microscope. This microscope can be interpreted as a symbol of surveillance and knowledge-gathering, which may suggest a disciplined method to interviewing.

The microscope-interviewers observe the salaryman in front of them. This three-to-one organisation of salarymen intensifies the expression of anxiety and fear on the human salaryman. The three interviewers to one interviewee is a representation

of a synopticon. Mathiesen (1997) says a synopticon is a mode of surveillance in which "the many…see and admire the few" (p. 215). The synopticon is an opposite of a panopticon, yet also has a surveilling function. Like the "perverse dream" of a panopticon (Foucault 1995:225), a synopticon is depicted in this painting as fear-inducing as it positions the control and domination of the many on the few (i.e. singular human salaryman). While Mathiesen (1997) draws attention to mass media, such as television and the internet, as forms of a synopticon, Ishida's painting draws attention to the micro-instances in which synopticon surveillance occurs in organisations, such as interviews.

The microscopes are symbols for "information professionals", or interviewers in the painting (Mathiesen 1997:227). In designating the interviewee as a person to examine for information, there is an emotional intensity in placing the interviewee 'under a microscope.' The expression of being 'under a microscope' is visualised in the painting as alienating, due to the isolation of the human salaryman and his expression of fear and anxiety reflected in the mirrors.

5.2.2 Test (assessment)

After the interview, further knowledge about the human salaryman is obtained through physical testing. Testing is a way to assess the body for organisational performance. The paintings analysed here represent the body as a site of knowledge, in contrast to the mind as a source of knowledge (as depicted in the previous painting). The evaluation of the internal and external parts of a salaryman close in on the hidden or private self. I observe two paintings as representations of testing the human salaryman.

Conveyor-belt People (1996, number 35; see Image 12) shows a vertical escalator extending beyond the top of the painting. As the title suggests, the escalator is a 'conveyor-belt'. This is apparent when the painting is rotated 90 degrees. At the bottom of the conveyor-belt is a man with his eyes closed and he wears a dark brown suit and brown tie. He lays on the escalator step with his right arm resting beside him on the lower step. His left leg is slightly bent as it rests on the step, while his right leg hangs on the step beneath him. This pose is repeated every two steps, where another similar-looking man wearing an identical outfit rests in the same physical position.

Image 12. *Conveyor-belt People* (1996)

On either side of the escalator are salarymen operating on the resting figures. The operators wear beige lab jackets with cuffs at the wrist. Each operator wears a pair of black goggles on top of their heads. In their left hands, the operators hold a pair of silver needle nose pliers, and in their right hands they grasp a silver standard screwdriver. One can observe the salarymen rising up the escalator as a reference to objects along a conveyor-belt; similar to car parts along an assembly line, the salarymen are operated on with tools and inspected by workers. Hence, this painting can be interpreted as a dark representation of Fordist management and operations

applied to humans. Another interpretation is the process of alienation as inspection is mediated by tools rather than human interaction; this latter meaning is supported by Ishida's concern in the breakdown of human relationships (Yokoyama 2010).

In comparison with *Interview* (1998), *Conveyor-belt People* (1996) also features the quality of observation. Instead of the microscopes, the latter painting includes the goggles as a symbol for observation. Similar to to both paintings is the non-use of these tools; for example, the goggles rest on top of the inspector's heads. Hence, the goggles are not in use. Or the lens of the microscope is not used to examine the documents. This suggests that microscopes and goggles are a symbolic quality of observation, particularly as a function to observe. The identity of inspection in the representation of microscopes and goggles is the basis for identifying a quality of organisational dystopia, which is objectification of human labour (Xamou Art 2012).

When observing *Conveyor-belt People* (1996), the structure of the escalator in relation to the human viewer suggests that I am invited to step onto the escalator (conveyor-belt). The placement of the entrance to the escalator in the foreground, directly ahead of the observer, is an intentional structural placement that contrasts with the viewer's indirect perspectives in many of Ishida's paintings (e.g. *Exercise Equipment,* 1997; *Interview,* 1998; *Toilet Refugee* 1, 1996; *Beer Garden Take-off,* 1995). This organisation of *Conveyor-belt People* (1996) forces the observer to visually follow the inspection of the salarymen along the escalator. This is an important organisational element to the painting, and also may suggest the 'forcing' of salarymen for inspection by societal or organisational pressures.

In addition, the representation of a conveyor-belt by an escalator is a sample of contradiction in a Surrealist oeuvre. The escalator is an identifiable feature of real life; the habitual understanding of an escalator is challenged in the imagination of an escalator as a conveyor-belt. This estrangement is a feature of Surrealism, and is also an important foundation of a dystopian critique since a dystopia requires a tie to reality in order to shock and provoke change (Hillegas 1967; Snodgrass 1996; Stableford 2010; Zamyatin 1922).

Another painting that represents the assessment of the salaryman's body is *Exercise Equipment* (1997, number 59; see Image 13). In this painting, a man in a dark grey suit runs on a treadmill. He wears a buttoned-up, white-collared shirt with a grey tie. He appears to try and look over his right shoulder at the inspectors (who are other

salarymen in white smocks) behind him. Attached to his right ear lobe is a white, plastic rectangle connected to a black wire that hooks into the treadmill.

Image 13. *Exercise Equipment* (1997)

Between the jogger's legs is a hook, which is customarily used for hanging meat. The hook is attached to a long, grey pole held by one of the inspectors in a white butcher's jacket and hat. On either side of the treadmill is another man in a white butcher's jacket holding a pole with a meat hook. As if clouded by dream, the white-clothed inspectors appear to be sinking into a grey, murky ground.

The treadmill is elongated so as to appear like a conveyor-belt. Hence, the appearance of a conveyor-belt is a similarity between *Exercise Equipment* (1997) and *Conveyor-belt People* (1996). This visual quality is one of the reasons for including both paintings together in this section. Yet, a key difference in the conveyor-belt is in *Conveyor-belt People* (1996) the salarymen are being inspected with manufacturing tools, while in *Exercise Equipment* (1997) the running man is fearful of meat hooks. In brief, one interpretation is that the salarymen in *Conveyor-belt People* (1996) are treated as parts or products along an assembly line, while the salaryman in *Exercise Equipment* (1997) is treated more like an animal due to the threat of meat hooks. Thus, the latter painting suggests a physical consequence on flesh.

The contrast between the salaryman-as-product and the salaryman-as-animal is important aspects of an understanding of worker alienation. Worker alienation is often discussed as occurring when a worker feels estranged from their own labour power (Marx 2007[1844]). In *Conveyor-belt People* (1996), the inspectors act as a function of inspection due to the repetition of the goggle-wearing salarymen whose ambiguous features remove any trace of individual identity. Since a person of power would have identifiable features since they are a specified as an individual subject (Foucault 1995). Whereas in *Exercise Equipment* (1997), the salaryman running along the treadmill is alienated from his own humanity (rather than labour power) when he is threatened by meat hooks. The reference to meat hooks suggests that the salaryman is alienated from his human qualities, which is reminiscent of Marx's (2007[1844]) notion of alienation as a reversion to animalistic tendencies.

When observing *Exercise Equipment* (1997), it brought to mind Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle.* The novel portrays the dystopian-esque conditions of immigrants in Chicago working in the meat industry. The painting reminded me of the following passage :

> Meantime, heedless of all these things, the men upon the floor were going about their work. Neither squeals of hogs nor tears of visitors made any difference to them; one by one they hooked up the hogs, and one by one with a swift stroke they slit their throats. There was a long line of hogs, with squeals and life-blood ebbing away together, until at last each started again, and vanished with a splash into a huge vat of boiling water.
>
> It was all so very businesslike that one watched it fascinated. It was pork-making by machinery, pork-making by applied mathematics. And yet somehow the most matter-of-fact person could not help thinking of the hogs; they were so innocent, they came so very trustingly; and they were so very human in their protests - and so perfectly within their rights! They had done nothing to deserve it, and it as adding insult to injury, as the thing was done here, swinging them up in this cold-blooded, impersonal way, without a pretence at apology, without the homage of a tear. Now and then a visitor wept, to be sure; but this slaughtering machine ran on, visitors or no visitors. It was like some horrible crime committed in a

> dungeon, all unseen and unheeded, buried out of sign and of memory. (Sinclair 2004[1906]:44-45)

The Jungle, Yoder (1975) claims, is Sinclair's critique of an industrialised America: "What had happened to the spirit of America? What devil had tempted the American mind to substitute cash for value, thus allowing this intended Garden of Eden to go to seed - nourished by the heat of industrialisation into a jungle of greed and grease and despair?" (p. 104). In brief, Sinclair's novel characterised industry an assault on morality, which is similar to painting motifs at the time (see Chapter 2). While Sinclair's novel is in an alternative context to contemporary Japanese salarymen, one can interpret a connection in Ishida's painting to the dark history of growing industry. In particular, the 'so very human' hogs is a similarity to the 'so very human' salaryman threatened with slaughter. Of course, alienation as a consequence in treating a human as an animal is one interpretation of the painting. When reflecting on *Exercise Equipment* (1997), one may interpret the painting as a further case to explore the breakdown of human relationships, particularly when humans are devalued as animals.

Conveyor-belt People (1996) and *Exercise Equipment* (1997) are two paintings that exhibit the narrative of transforming the salaryman into an organisational object. As Caro (2015) interpreted, the paintings communicate "the training of young people to enter into economic servitude, and thus emotional isolation." This interpretation by Caro (2015) supports the argument that Ishida represents alienation in the practice of rendering a salaryman as an organisational object. This objectification of salarymen is a quality of organisational dystopia. The sense of 'economic servitude' identified by Caro (2015) is an additional interpretive dimension that fits with Marx's (2007[1844]) critique that workers are enslaved in their alienation since workers must estrange from their labour power in order to earn the money necessary to survive in society.

Conveyor-belt People (1996) and *Exercise Equipment* (1997) are two paintings that represent "dehumanising aspects" of work in Ishida's paintings (Caro 2015). In *Conveyor-belt People* (1996), salarymen are represented as objects along a conveyor-belt. And in *Exercise Equipment* (1997), the running salaryman is alienated from his humanity due to a threat on the flesh by meat hooks. The quality of dehumanisation, whether as objectification or alienation, is a component of organisational dystopia.

5.2.3 Package (ready for work)

Following the mental and physical inspection and development, salarymen are rendered packaged goods of organisations. The notion of 'package' is adopted from Ishida's painting *Cargo* (1997, number 53; see Image 14), in which salarymen, who are painted as cargo packages, get off a train and head to work. Due to the warm lighting of the painting, particularly in contrast to the murky grey and dark colours in the majority of Ishida's oeuvre, suggests that it is day-time and that the salarymen are on their way to work. Each salaryman is wearing a light-grey suit with a white pocket square and a pink tie. The bodies of the salarymen are structured like a box tied with two pieces of twine at each side. The head of each salaryman protrudes from the top next to a plastic handle. While I adopt the word 'package' to describe the salarymen in this painting, one might interpret the salarymen as 'briefcases' to keep with a language about work.

Image 14. *Cargo* (1997)

One noticeable feature of this painting is its use of light. The colours of this painting consist of lighter greys and pale pinks; this is a significant departure from the dark grey and navy colours that dominate Ishida's oeuvre. While lightness may

translate into a sense of hope, which is relevant to a theme of dystopia (i.e. escape), this light appears as a false hope since salarymen remain constricted to their packaged identity.

One interpretation of this painting is by Caro (2015), who "observe[s] the monotony of a Japanese salaryman's routine, as in images like men being packed into a subway car like cargo." In contrast, one can interpret the painting as a comment on the ambiguity of salarymen as workers who have a collective identity (hence they are not recognised as individuals). Therefore, *Cargo* (1997) is a comment on the collective ambiguity of salarymen since they are 'packaged' alike (Horikiri 2010).

In a third interpretation of this painting, Xamou Art (2012) writes the painting is a critique of "a society consisting of cloned, high-performing people on their daily commute and grind as corporate robots." While there is a general sense of conformity present in the interpretations of Ishida's painting *Cargo* (1997), I take issue with the word choice in Xamou Art's (2012) interpretation. The use of 'clones' suggests a science fiction quality about Ishida's painting; while science fiction is historically relevant to the genre of dystopian literature (Baccolini and Moylan 2003; Fitting 2010), 'clones' suggests that the salarymen are copies of each other. However, following the interpretation of Horikiri (2010), Ishida's use of his image as a basis for forming the identity of the salarymen as ambiguous self-portraits, the salarymen are not 'clones'; instead, the salarymen are ambiguous due to the collective identity which removes individual personalities and features. Hence, salarymen are not identical beings; instead, there is a removal of individual identity which makes it seem as though salarymen are 'clones'.

When the paintings *Interview* (1998), *Conveyor-belt People* (1996), *Exercise Equipment* (1997), and *Cargo* (1997) are organised as a process, one can interpret the means to render a salaryman as an object of an organisation. The salaryman is depicted as an object in *Cargo* (1997). The salaryman reaches a state of objectification due to mental and physical examination, which can also influence feelings of alienation.

5.3 Salarymen at work

In this section I compare and contrast the representation of salarymen at work. Both images depict a similar representation of objectification shared by the worker

and supervisor. Hence, I argue that objectification, as a quality of organisational dystopia, is shared by salarymen even when salarymen differ in hierarchical positions.

Section Chief's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building (1996, number 33; see Image 15) features a man with an apathetic expression looking into the distance. He wears a dark suit and sits cross-legged in suspension above the tiled ground. His body takes the shape of an office chair: his arms are replaced by thick, cushioned chair arms covered in navy fabric and white piping, and his crossed legs mimic a chair seat. The chair is in poor condition, for example, the fabric of the chair is stained with brown spots and the chair has rust.

Image 15. *Section Chief's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building* (1996)

The room has white walls, which are mostly covered with white tiles. The floor is also covered with white tiles, each feature an inflated blue 'x' at its centre. The

contrast of room with the decay of the chair presents a heightened sense of ‘worn out' salaryman.

The cross-legged posture of the section chief is a distinguishing feature of the salaryman. This informal body posture suggests the section chief is more relaxed, especially in comparison of the posture of the salaryman in the next painting. While there is a sense of freedom of the posture, the conformed structure of the human body to the function of a chair suggests that the salaryman is also conformed to organisational practice (Starrett, Starrett, and Cardoza 2016). Another way of interpreting this painting is to suggest that the painting is not about a conformity to the organisation, but is a depiction of objectification. In this latter understanding of the painting, the objectification of the worker in the position of a chair upsets the observer's understanding of what a chair is. A chair is not only an object in an organisation, it is also a meaningful expression of a ‘worn out’ salaryman.

The second painting to compare and contrast with is *Worker’s Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building* (1996, number 34; see Image 16). This painting features a man with a blank expression looking into the invisible beyond of the painting. He wears a dark suit and sits with his legs parallel and folded beneath him. His human body is blended with an office chair: human arms are replaced with white, plastic chair arms and his folded legs rest on a white, plastic chair leg with four dark wheels. This white plastic chair shows signs of wear, such as brown blotches along the white, plastic arms and legs of the chair. The salaryman sits in a room with white walls that are embellished with a light-handed mix of yellow, blue and grey. The floor is covered with tiles that each features a bloated ‘x’ coloured in navy and brown. There is a distinct contrast in the upkeep of the room in contrast to the 'wear' of the salaryman.

When comparing the section chief and worker, there is a distinction in the quality of chair each salaryman occupies. The importance of the chair is a quality also identified in Skinner's (1979) analysis of salarymen comic strips; for example, in one comic, “a low-level office worker is shown brooding over the different qualities of chairs given to high-ranking employees, chairs being more plush as one goes up in rank. But the low-level staff member sees no difference between the chair he has and that used by a man with three years less seniority” (p. 143). Chairs are a common feature in organisations that have a symbolic quality in that they reflect rank and superiority.

Image 16. *Worker's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building* (1996)

Chairs, while often regarded as a taken-for-granted feature of organisational life, are symbolic representations of power. For instance, an executive chair may be compared to a king's throne: an executive, like royalty, is at the top of the organisation with supreme power (Ladkin 2010). While a 'thing' of organisations, chairs have symbolic meaning that can connote identity and, from that identity, the value and function(s) of that person. Hence the distinction between a section chief and worker is visible by the state of chairs. However, both salarymen appear 'worn out' since both chairs feature visual evidence of decay and wear. Thus, there is a general quality in the depiction of salarymen as tired since they are 'worn out.' In addition to the idea that

salarymen are worn out, the representation of salarymen as chairs in an organisation suggest objectification.

One may argue that the differences in posture and quality of chair may represent an individualism to salarymen. For example, the section chief informally crosses his legs while the worker sits with his legs parallel underneath him. This does suggest there is a greater degree of freedom as a section chief. However, the overwhelming imposition of the chair as a visual element suggests that this freedom is undermined by the objectification of labour. Xamou Art (2012) interprets, "In Ishida's art you clearly detect this sense of beings squashed into smaller spaces, but also crammed into some societal expectations of performing a role or a function, be it a military tank, a desk, a urinal or a building." In regards to this interpretation, organisational workers are contained as office chairs in representation of an organisational function. This means that a section chief and a worker are alienated from their own human capabilities and desires since they are represented as a 'thing' that serves an organisational 'function.'

Another interesting element of comparison between these two paintings is the setting of an out-of-commission building. 'Out-of-commission' refers to a thing which is out of order, like a machine, and thus not in use. One might expect that an out-of-commission building would be in disarray and decay, yet in the paintings one can observe the opposite. The walls and tiled floor appear in good condition; in contrast it is is the chair or the salaryman that appears 'out-of-commission' or 'worn out'. The contradiction of what is expected to be seen due to the title versus what is observed in the painting is a technique adopted by the Surrealists to induce visual shock (Alden 1999; Carr and Zanetti 2000).

A dystopia can be classified by extreme asymmetric power relations in which one person or 'side' is dominant and in control (Baccolini and Moylan 2003). In these two paintings, I observe that a section chief and a worker are similarly objectified. In order to support this interpretation, I turn to an additional painting by Ishida called *Under the President's Umbrella* (1996, number 27; see Image 17),. This painting differs from the majority of the paintings presented in this chapter since there is no visual evidence of a synthesis of human body and object. Therefore, this painting is a departure from Ishida's typical Surrealist qualities (Horikiri 2010). Instead, the

painting refers to extreme inequality in organisational relations by representing differences in size and movement.

Image 17. *Under the President's Umbrella* (1996)

This painting shows an enlarged man who is off-centre of the painting. He has a moustache and holds the frame of an oversized umbrella. Due to his size, posture and unique moustache, he is assumed to be the titular 'President'. The umbrella, a mix of tarnished white pipes and decaying steel, is a fixture from which seven visible, dangling subjects swing around the head of the President. The moustache is one of the first visual instances in which not all the portrayed men appear the same as the conformed, ambiguous self-portraits of Ishida (Yokoyama 2010). From Yokohama's (2010) interpretation, this suggests that the President is a person of power that Ishida does not identify with (powerless).

The difference in size among the salarymen depicts the President as the visually and symbolically dominant person. As the dominant person, the President controls his workers; this control is visualised in movement. Since the President holds the umbrella can can set the pace and direction in which the salarymen move. Thibault (2014) remarks that scale is an important visual aspect in drawing on a dystopian

extreme of intimidation by imposing one's power on another, which can lead to conformity and alienation. The grey, gloomy background of the painting emphasises a dark despair of a dystopian environment.

The movement of the swinging salarymen in *Under the President's Umbrella* (1996) is different from salarymen moving along a conveyor-belt or treadmill in *Conveyor-belt People* (1997) or *Exercise Equipment* (1997), respectively. Since the movement of the salarymen is not caused by a machine; instead, movement is intentionally directed by the President. This can be interpreted as a visual metaphor for phrases like 'puppets on a string', which is seen as 'workers on an umbrella.' The I'mage in this new context explores the specific experience of Japanese salarymen.

Observation and surveillance are seen in the previous paintings in the depiction of a microscope and goggles. Rather than rely on symbolic visual elements, this painting depicts salarymen rotating around the President. In consequence, it appears as though no worker directly gazes at the President; instead, the President, while rotating the workers around him, is able to gaze at each salaryman as they pass him. One can interpret this similarity to the Japanese custom of bowing, in which a person lowers their head and back in order to signify a greeting, thanks, or shame. The deeper the bow, then the deeper the respect; for instance, modern emperors of Japan are greeted by the 'saikeirei' bow in which the upper body is slanted at 45 degrees (Dasgupta 2013). This means that the person bowing is unable to see the emperor, whereas the emperor is able to see his subjects in a subordinate position. Bowing is an integral part of salarymen communication since the movement is an embodiment of subordination (Dasgupta 2013).

The inability of workers 'to see' the President can also be interpreted as a reference to a panopticon, in which the people observed are in full view to the observer whilst those observed are unable to see the observer (Foucault 1995). Yet, when the President rotates the workers, he is unable to see each salaryman at all times; this marks a distinction with the nature of a panopticon. Thus, the opportunity to be out of sight of the President suggests there is some freedom within the relationship of domination and control. For instance, even to the observer, the salarymen who are out of the President's sight have their backs to the viewer. This makes it difficult for the observer to note what exactly is going on. However, even in a moment of freedom, it seems as though there is no resistance or escape. Instead, workers follow each other

around in a similar posture and, for the salaryman visible to observe, a similarly apathetic expression as they revolve around the President. It appears there is a complacency and acceptance on the part of the salarymen in remaining in this state of control and domination, which, according to Beautiful Decay (2010), is "the most unsettling thing about his [Ishida's] paintings."

5.4 Interpretation: qualities of organisational dystopia

When analysing and interpreting the above paintings, there are repeating qualities in the images, such as objectification and alienation. As I turn the interpretation of these paintings in response to the research question, *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?*, *o*bjectification is an important aspect of organisational dystopia. Objectification is represented in two ways: a synthesis of the human body and an object and a removal of subjectivity. These two techniques are representative of a Surrealist genre in the use of contradiction (Alden 1999; Balakian 1986; Brodskaïa 2012). Alienation is depicted in two ways: a removal of humanity by objectification and a treatment of humans as animal. Objectification and alienation are two qualities of organisational dystopia.

To start, objectification is depicted is through the synthesis of a salaryman with an object. This is a particular theme in Ishida's artistry, which draws attention to the ways in which a salaryman is treated as a tool or function of the organisation (Xamou Art 2012). The salarymen are an organisational function, rather than organisational individuals possessing their own power, since they are objectified through practices of knowledge-gathering about the mind (interviews) and the body (tests). This is similar to the research Townley (1993).

A second aspect to objectification is the removal of subjectivity (Nussbaum 1995). In this sense, Ishida removes individual identity by representing salarymen as ambiguous self-portraits (Yokoyama 2010). By depicting salarymen as ambiguous estrangements from his own identity, there is a sensitivity in which Ishida sees himself in everyone. However, because it is an ambiguous representation of self-identity, it is also a statement that Ishida is seen in everyone, since everyone is the same (Ocula 2017). Hence Ishida's paintings depict a sameness of Japanese salarymen, which is a component in the removal of subjectivity (Nussbaum 1995). Mechanisms of surveillance also 'close down' on freedom and privacy, which are foundational in

allowing a person to exercise individuality (Clegg and Courpasson 2007). For example, in *Interview* (1998), the interviewee is being interviewed by three members of the organisation. This imbalance, in which the few are observed by the many, or synoptic surveillance, contributes to the extremes of power relations that characterise an organisational dystopia (Baccolini and Moylan 2003; Mathiesen 1997). This also removes subjectivity; hence, following interviews and tests, the salaryman is a package ready for work in *Cargo* (1997).

Cargo (1997) represents objectification in that salarymen are packaged products. Since salarymen are products, they are ‘things' of function rather than ‘persons' of force and power (Xamou Art 2012). The conformity of colour and shape of the salarymen on the subway train emphasises replication and standardisation, which are the characteristics of mass production (of salarymen). One could argue that objectification is not ‘bad’, yet, in the experience of objectification visualised on canvas, there is a sense of apathy and complacency reveal the salarymen surrendering to their fate (Beautiful Decay 2010). As Hong Kong Hustle (2013) reflect, “In many [paintings], the figures who occupy his [Ishida’s] works appear both burdened and resigned to their fate, almost as if they were sentenced to a repetitive task.” This objectification, visualised in colours of grey and navy, impacts on feelings of alienation. Feelings of alienation include powerlessness, isolation and self-estrangement, appear on the salarymen’s faces and in the visual elements of the images, including colour and body posture (Blauner 1964, cited in O’Donahue and Nelson 2014).

In regards to alienation, it is argued that this is a consequence of objectification. Due to objectification, workers are stripped of their human capabilities, such as intelligence, creativity and the ability to improvise; this is reminiscent of Marx’s (1996) comment on alienation as the removal of labour power. In addition to objectification, another aspect of alienation is the treatment of workers as animals. Marx (1996, 2007[1844]) criticised systems of production for diminishing individuals to their animal functions. This criticism is present in Ishida's paintings in the comparison between *Exercise Equipment* (1997) and *The Jungle*. In *Exercise Equipment* (1997), the running salaryman is threatened by meat hooks. This can thus be determined as an influence on alienation in which human-to-human relations are undermined in the treatment of a salaryman as animal. These two types of alienation

suggest there is more than one way of removing or threatening a person's humanity. By drawing on the Surrealist technique of contradiction, Ishida demonstrates human/ object and human/animal as qualities of alienation evident in an organisational dystopia.

One of the noticeable representations in Ishida's paintings is the meeting of bureaucratic and industrial labour. In the depiction of salarymen, who are white-collar workers, they behave as industrial inspectors on an assembly line. This may suggest that historical types of labour are still 'handed down' into contemporary representations of organising; and may even be used in the objectification of salarymen. Marx (1996) argued, "The instrument of labour strikes down the labourer. This direct antagonism between the two comes out most strongly, whenever newly introduced machinery competes with handicrafts or manufacturers, handed down from former times. But even in the modern industry the continual improvement of machinery, and the development of the automatic system, has an analogous effect" (p. 435). In other words, technological developments are a threat to the human-ness of human labour. Today, this is evident in the threat of machines to replace human labour; while previously this was a concerned for blue collar workers, the development of artificial intelligence is a threat to white collar jobs (e.g. Rendall 2016; von Radowitz 2017; Wakefield 2016; Wang 2017). Hence, there is a technological threat to the identity of Japanese salarymen.

The threat of machines and technology on the identity of Japanese salarymen also has an effect on relationships between salarymen. In *Conveyor-belt People* (1996) and *Exercise Equipment* (1997), tools are a way of mediating and estranging a worker from fellow workers. For instance, the hand-held tools of observation and the meat hooks act as a way of estranging the humans from each other, and they render the individual under inspection into an object or animal. Ergo, tools are also a way of alienating workers since the use of tools estranges human relationships since interactions are mediated by objects (Costas and Fleming 2009).

The qualities of objectification and alienation are represented in an organisational dystopia. The paintings *Section Chief's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building* (1996) and *Worker's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building* (1996) communicate that these qualities envelope salarymen of different

positions. Hence, organisational dystopia is not an individual dystopia; rather, the effects of objectification and alienation impact a collective of Japanese salarymen.

However, one may interpret *Under the President's Umbrella* (1996) as a challenge to the totalisation of objectification and alienation since there are moments when the salarymen are out of the President's gaze. Nonetheless, the sense of complacency and resignation to one's fate (Beautiful Decay 2010; Hong Kong Hustle 2013), suggest that even in opportunities of freedom, salarymen remain constrained by the experience of alienation. Therefore, opportunities to escape from objectification and alienation are not taken; instead, it appears salarymen endure their organisational dystopia. This discussion on escape (hopefulness) and endure (hopelessness) of a dystopia is the basis for discussing themes of organisational dystopia in the next chapter.

5.5 Summary

This chapter responds to the research question, *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* I respond to this question in two parts. First, I assess a series of images that suggest a process to the objectification and alienation of salarymen. From an interview, to test, to package, salarymen are increasingly captured as objects of knowledge (Townley 1993). As a result, this negatively affects the salarymen since objectification contributes to feelings of alienation. This alienation is represented in two ways: a loss of humanity and the treatment of humans as animals. Alienation is an important quality to discuss since it impacts the quality of human relationships, which was one of Ishida's many concerns (Horikiri 2010). It is argued that objectification and alienation are qualities of organisational dystopia shared by salarymen regardless of their organisational position, such as a section chief or worker.

6. Themes of organisational dystopia

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I respond to the research question, *What are themes of organisational dystopia?* When formulating this research question, I was concerned with the paradox of organisational dystopia. This paradox concerns whether a dystopia is a site to escape from or is a place to endure (Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007; Rhodes 2007). A dystopia represents an extreme possible reality that can constrain the possibilities for freedom, identity and relationships (Fitting 2010; Hillegas 1967; Manguel 2003; Stableford 2010). Hence it is important to address themes of organisational dystopia in order to identify in what way an organisational dystopia places limits on freedom, identity and relationships.

The paradox of dystopia assumes that a dystopia can be escaped or must be endured. When a dystopia has an opportunity of escape, this escape is a hopeful way to avoid, reverse, or resolve qualities of dystopia. Gary Sul Morson, cited in Booker (1994), elaborates, "Whereas utopias describe an escape *from* history, these anti-utopias [dystopias] describe an escape, or attempted escape, *to* history, which is to say, to the world of contingency, conflict and uncertainty" (p. 4). The escape from a dystopia is thus a complex reflection on hope, in which it is uncertain if a dystopia can be fully escaped. In contrast, the representation of a dystopia as a state that one can not escape from, and thus must endure (e.g. Rhodes 2004, 2007), criticises the historical conditions that have led to this inescapable horror.

The representations of hopefulness (escape) and hopelessness (endure) are analysed and interpreted in twelve selected paintings by Tetsuya Ishida in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (2010). I address these twelve paintings in three curated sections: the first is on mental escapes, the second is on refuge in privacy, and the third is on movement as a representation of escape. Please note that there are three paintings in this chapter that are not reproduced here due to permissions of use (see Appendix A). These three paintings are *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996), *Faith in Speed* (1996), and *Can't fly Anymore* 2 (1996). Since these paintings are also unavailable online through the Tetsuya Ishida official website managed by TETSU Inc., I provide a web link to where the paintings can be viewed elsewhere.

6.2 Mental escapes

Two paintings represent the internal world of the salaryman at his desk. The first painting for comparison is *Mobility Dream* (1996, number 37; see Image 18). In this painting a salaryman seems to be asleep at his desk with his head resting on his crossed arms. His brown trousers and black Oxford shoes are visible underneath the desk. In the background the wall is lifted to reveal infinite pairs of legs dressed in the same brown fabric. The legs appear in mid-step as some black Oxford are shown in motion. The desk also has human features since it is held up by a pair of Oxford shoes in-step and a pair of brown trouser legs also in mid-step.

Image 18. *Mobility Dream* (1996)

Dreaming in order to escape the limitations and rationalities in reality is a feature of Surrealism. Surrealism embraces the imagination as a means to contradict, criticise, and escape reality (Breton 1924). In this painting, dreaming is a way to escape organisational life while at work. Sleeping at work or napping on the job are relevant to discuss about organisational life for two reasons. First, sleeping while at work is identified as a practice of misbehaviour since sleeping negatively affects productivity, and thus profitability (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999). Second, "as the demands of the organisation increase, the amount of time required to service and

maintain oneself for work - resting, sleeping, eating, washing and household chores - means that increasing amounts of time become centred around the world of work" (Hopfl 2005:277, 278). In other words, life is centred on work; in consequence, the time for taking care of the self, such as sleeping, is impacted by obligations and commitments to work. This is related to Hidaka's (2010) analysis of Japanese salarymen whose meaning to life was centred on work.

The understanding of sleep by Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) is an assumption in contrast to a Japanese meaning of sleep at work. In Japan, napping at work is praised by organisations and the national culture, since napping is a result of overworking: "You must be working yourself to exhaustion" (Rousseau 2016). In Japanese culture, napping at work is called 'inemuri'. Inemuri is not considered sleep, but rather a state in which a person is dozing or deeply daydreaming; hence, at any moment, the salaryman is able to be woken up in order to return to work (Bulkeley 2016; Steger 2016). Therefore, inemuri involves remaining present at work, rather than escaping work, since a salaryman can relinquish this 'micro nap' at any moment (Williams 2005). This cultural understanding of inemuri impacts the analysis of *Mobility Dream* (1996). One may interpret the painting as an act of resistance to sleep at work, whereas another interpretation is to identify inemuri is a way to endure the burdens of work. Inemuri is a culturally specific type of sleep in which the personal need to sleep is subordinate to the obligations and control of an organisation.

A salaryman's desk is an important site of organisational life. For example, *Drawer* (1996, number 38; see Image 19) shows a salaryman at his desk looking anxiously over his shoulder t as he places a green vintage toy car on a dead man lying in his drawer. The living salaryman wears a white, collared shirt with dark brown trousers. A green, vintage toy car rests on his knees in addition to a red and white packet of cigarettes. On his desk is a computer keyboard, a can of Peach juice and a partly visible orange and white toy van. The dead salaryman lies in the third drawer of the desk. His skin is pale and his eyes are closed. He wears a dark brown suit jacket and a red tie with a white pattern; both the tie and jacket are the same as those of the living salaryman sitting at the desk placing toys and cigarettes on the dead man's body. The dead man's head is surrounded by upright white lilies, in which the white colour is a symbol of death.

Image 19. Drawer (1996)

In the observer's top left-hand corner of the painting, is a partly visible male figure wearing a dark suit. His left hand is clenched in a fist, while his right hand grips the back of the worker's chair. It is unclear who this person is since only his lower half is visible in the painting. Due to the structure of the painting, this missing face is an opportunity for the viewer to imagine who this salaryman could be.

The similarity in clothing of the living and dead salaryman suggest that they are the same person. One way to justify this analysis is in the acknowledgement that Ishida paintings himself in his paintings. His representation of self is in ambiguous self-portraits, where the depiction of the salaryman is vague to the point that it could be any salaryman within Japanese society. Since Ishida communicated his feeling of lost identity in the conformity of salarymen representation (Horikiri 2010; Thomas 2013; WorkshopLoVi 2014).

Using this interpretation as a foundation for analysis, one can see the painting as a representation of a salaryman mourning a 'death' of himself. In this way, the salaryman is laying to rest a particular identity or identities of himself. One may interpret from the toy vehicles that the salaryman is mourning the loss of his childhood; such an interpretation may refer to a Freudian perspective of the psyche, which was influential in early Surrealism (Breton 1924). In contrast, one may interpret that the salaryman is mourning a loss of his masculinity. The loss of masculinity is a concern in Hidaka's (2010) generational interviews of salarymen, who face threats to their masculinity based on societal and cultural shifts and events, such as the widespread impact of the financial recession in the 1990s. One reason why one can observe the painting as a reflection on a death to masculinity is because smoking is often associated with overtly masculine identities (Rudy 2005).

Daniel Gilman (2004) writes in his essay "Smoking in Modern Japan", "Smoking is thus intrinsically Japanese. It is a method of spiritual and social development, a tool for fitting into society and a way of rising above social restrictions" (p. 179). Smoking is thus significant to identity, as well as maintaining human relationships. This is because smoking is a social activity, and when one is restricted from smoking, the individual is also restricted in their human relationships.

Mobility Dream (1996) and *Drawer* (1996) are paintings to compare since they focus on the desk as an organisational site. Inemuri and internal mourning are internal activities in the sense that they involve the imagination; yet, they are also externally observable since one can view the posture and facial expressions of a salaryman who is napping or anxious. The focus on the mental, internal world was an important theme for the Surrealists, as it is a place to break away from reality through the use of imagination (Aspley 2010; Breton 1924; Waldberg 1965). However, while the Surrealists position the dream or internal world as a site to escape reality, it appears as though these escapes are only temporary. For instance, inemuri is a state that can be easily broken when the salaryman is recalled to work. In addition, the internal mourning is threatened by the observation and overseeing of a manager, for example. Hence, in both cases, there is a possibility of the salaryman being recalled to work.

6.3 Private escapes: workplace refugees

In addition to the salaryman's desk, another important site of organisational life is the toilet. Toilets are places within an organisation that often remain hidden or unarticulated in organisational research. Toilets are an important space for privacy, just as are rooftops. These spaces of privacy are a way to escape or endure organisational dystopia.

Toilet Refugee 1 (1996, number 22; see Image 20) shows a salaryman sitting inside a western toilet bowl. This toilet bowl is on two plumbing pipes, and thus gives the appearance of a train or roller coaster. which riding the plumbing rails in order to escape from the outstretched hand of a hidden man whose shadow is chasing after him. The salaryman's brow is anxiously furrowed as he attempts to escape from the out-stretched hand of a hidden man, whose shadow features on the tiled wall. It appears as though the salaryman is moving since his tie is flying over his left shoulder.

Image 20. *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996)

The looming shadow and outstretched hand suggest the salaryman is being chased, although the lack of identifiable features make it difficult to specify who it is. This mystery is an aspect of Surrealism that allows for the observer to utilise their own imagination to envision who such a person could be (Brodskaïa 2012). For instance,

René Magritte often played on mystery in his paintings with his use of a floating apple or white cloth to cover the faces of his subjects (see Chapter 2). Hence, one may interpret the mysterious figure as a colleague or manager. One may say that it is Ishida's father following him, and not a salaryman at all. However, the cloth of a suit cuff and white shirt suggest it is the armour of a salaryman (Dasgupta 2000, 2013; Thomas 2013).

It is important to compare this painting to *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996, number 23), since this painting also features the toilet as a site of escape. *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996) features a similar looking salaryman in an eastern toilet, who is anxiously looking over his left shoulder at the shadow behind him. He is wearing a dark brown suit and his brown tie is flying over his left shoulder. His arms are stretched out, grasping the toilet's pipes. The toilet appears to be suspended in mid-air as if it were flying. Following the salaryman in the toilet is a male shadow in mid-step. Unlike the previous painting, the hidden figure is completely invisible since only his shadow appears on the bathroom wall. The salaryman anxiously looks over his shoulder at this mysterious figure with the shadow. Unfortunately, this painting is not printed in this thesis due to reasons of permission. However, this painting can be viewed online at: https://www.artbasel.com/catalog/artwork/14325/Tetsuya-Ishida-toilet-refugee.

Two notable similarities between *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996) and *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996) is the anxiety on the salaryman's face at being followed and the organisation of the painting. Concerning the latter, both paintings feature a salaryman sitting in a toilet bowl riding the pipes in order to escape the mysterious salaryman. Important to note is the subtle differences between the two paintings: in *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996), the salaryman nervously looks ahead while the salaryman in *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996) looks over his shoulder. In addition, the toilets the salarymen are different: in *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996) a salaryman sits in a western toilet bowl, while the salaryman in *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996) sits in an eastern toilet bowl.

The depiction of two different toilets can be interpreted as a unification of organisational dystopia across the division of east and west. Hence, one can observe the paintings as a comment on organisational dystopia as a global concern. Or, since the subject of the paintings are Japanese salarymen, then the visualisation of a western and eastern toilet bowl is a comment on the tension of globalising forces in Japan. Regardless, the paintings are an important comment on organisational privacy.

Organisational privacy is a similar theme in the painting *Rooftop Refugee* (1996, number 36; see Image 21). This painting depicts a salaryman whose body is synthesised with a dirty stairwell. The salaryman seems to float on a rooftop edge, hence it is uncertain if he is about to jump or about to return to work since the rooftop floor is not visible in the painting. The salaryman's left hand is bent around the stairwell, pressing on a dull, circular red button. Above the button is a bright red bulb, and next to the light is a partially hidden intercom speaker. Behind the rooftop ledge, is a partially visible billboard for ‘Shecon’ in red lettering.

Image 21. *Rooftop Refugee* (1996)

Since there is a lack of clarity as to whether the salaryman is about to jump or return to work, this may suggest suicidal ideation. I identify the possibility of suicide

as a representation here since Ishida died at age 31 in 2005 after being hit by a train in Tokyo (Yokoyama 2010). The circumstances of his death remain unclear, though many have suggested it was suicide (e.g. Batten 2013) and not an accident, in part because his paintings are dark, gloomy and full of despair (WorkshopLoVi 2014). According to author Mitch Cullin, “His death [a suicide] can be interpreted as one foretold by the artist himself” due to the dystopia present in his art (WorkshopLoVi 2014). In addition, suicide has a place in the dystopian genre: in *Brave New World,* the Savage dies by suicide (see Chapter 1).

Besides death, one can observe the painting as a depiction of privacy. Since like the toilet refugees, the salaryman in this painting is seeking 'refuge' on a rooftop. The titular notion of ‘refugee’ suggests that these workers are attempting to find safety, having left their country (work) due to war, disaster or extreme prejudice (e.g. conflict, struggle, and death to identity). Hence the toilet and rooftop are places to escape organisational dystopia until the salarymen are recalled to work. The anxiety in being followed into the toilet suggests that there is an organisational invasion on private freedom and expression.

6.4 Salarymen outside work

Thus far analysis on the means to escape or endure organisational dystopia have approached sites common within the organisation. This third section examines the salaryman outside of work since there are no identifiable features of an organisation, such as a desk or toilet. Instead, the paintings allude to alternative settings such as a pub or amusement park. By exploring the salarymen outside of work, this opens analysis and interpretation into further opportunities of escape or ways to endure. The seven paintings analysed in this section are split into three manners of motion: trains, wheels and aeroplanes. Hence, this section has a reoccurring motif of transportation and movement. Movement is an interesting aspect to address in paintings since, by their very nature, paintings depict a frozen moment. Ergo, there is no actual movement, but rather movement is hinted at through visual details, and structure such as the tie flying over the subject’s shoulder in *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996).

6.4.1 Trains

There are two paintings that feature trains. The first is *Locomotive Man* (1995, number 12; see Image 22), which depicts a solitary salaryman in a grey suit whose body takes the place of a train engine. He sits with his knees against his chest within the tight space. His face is half-hidden by the large train's headlight. Behind his head protrudes a chimney. There is no smoke emitted from the chimney and there are no visible wheels, so it appears as though the salaryman is fixed in his place.

Image 22. *Locomotive man* (1995)

The clouded, light tan colour of the background offsets the dark colours and lines of the salaryman and the locomotive. This is similar to the technique used by L.S. Lowry to juxtapose the dark factories with a white background (Rohde 2007). The coloured background separates the salaryman from a fixed organisational setting, as if

he has escaped work. Nonetheless, his posture and the lack of smoke or wheels suggests he is without movement.

The salaryman in *Locomotive man* (1995) appears in *Leaving the Pub* (1995, number 13; see Image 23). In this second painting, his face appears flushed from drinking. He remains in a similar pose to the previous painting, although his fingers no longer appear as rigid. There is a shift in the perspective of the observer to the painting, hence his face is no longer hidden by the headlight. And the observer can see a smile on his face. He is accompanied by two other salarymen. In the middle car labelled 'MALTS' is a grey-suited man with a black and white tie. His cheeks are flushed and his face is partly covered by the roof of the train car. This salaryman's arms are positioned outside the car. In the third car also labelled 'MALTS' is a salaryman in a black suit with a red tie with white polka dots. Like the others, his face is flushed, and his arms are bent at the elbow. His arms are outside of the train car with his hands near his knees. Unlike the other two salarymen, this third salaryman sits in a train car with wheels.

Image 23. *Leaving the Pub* (1995)

Like the previous painting, the lack of steam emitting from the engine and the flat structure of the Oxford shoes suggests these salarymen are not moving. Similarly, the salarymen feature on an ambiguous background without a clear setting. Yet, the

title suggests the salarymen are ‘leaving the pub’. The pub is an important site of transformation since in the first painting, the salaryman is alone, half-hidden and complacent; in the latter painting, the salarymen is joined by two others and appears happier and more content due to his flushed face and smile. The sign ‘MALTS' in the painting suggests the change is due to alcohol.

When comparing both paintings, one interpretation is the alcohol has a positive effect. For instance, the salaryman in *Locomotive man* (1995) appears happier in *Leaving the Pub* (1995). Another interpretation of both paintings suggests that alcohol is a means to cope with organisational dystopia, since in both paintings neither of the salarymen are moving. Even though in the latter painting, the strict bent of the arms outside of the train cars can be a mimic to train wheels. Hence, in a despair of organisational dystopia, alcohol is a means to cope with work. Whether to escape or endure, alcohol is a part of organisational life that is alluded to in the paintings by Ishida.

6.4.2 Wheels

There are two paintings that represent movement in the depiction of wheels. The first painting titled *Big Wheel* (1995, number 10; see Image 24) depicts a salaryman whose head is planted in the centre of a wheel. He appears stoic and apathetic. Behind his head are metal spokes that connect the hub of the wheel, which is where the salaryman's head is, to the wheel’s perimeter. Hanging on to these spokes are two hands, unattached to a human body, tying a yellow tie with dark squares onto the spokes beneath the salaryman's head. Attached to the wheel are six legs placed at equal intervals. Each leg is clothed in the same grey fabric and brown shoe with a low heel. Since the salaryman’s face is directed outwards, his view is perpendicular to the direction in which his feet are moving. Since the head of the salaryman is perpendicular to the wheel and legs, the salaryman is unable to view where he is travelling to. One of the interesting circumstances this presents is that the head is not ‘in control’ or ‘aware’ of where a person is travelling to, which suggests a disjunction between control, body and movement.

Image 24. *Big Wheel* (1995)

One interpretation of this painting is that it depicts a salaryman alienated from his own body. Since he is not able to see in the way he is travelling. Another interpretation of the painting concerns the dehumanisation of the salaryman. The six legs around the wheel are like the six legs of a bug. Hence, there is a potential to identify the painting as another animalistic treatment of salarymen.

When this painting is compared to a second painting called *Faith in Speed* (1996, number 11), then the former interpretation about the alienation from one's own body is further supported. *Faith in Speed* (1996) features a salaryman's face in the centre of an inflated Goodrich tire in the centre-left of the painting. The salaryman's head and tie protrude out of the tire. Along the tire are shoe imprints that are in the same direction as in *Big Wheel* (1995). In *Faith in Speed* (1996), there is another salaryman with this his face and tie protruding out of a Goodrich tire; he appears as if a copy of the other salaryman, though he is partially cut off due to the canvas. Occupying the foreground of the painting is a third figure with a similar face, who is holding a steering wheel as he looks ahead of him. His head and shoulders are visible among grey and dark wooden boards. It is unclear if this is a makeshift car, as no

wheels are visible, or if the man is emerging out of the ground through a gap in the wooden boards. He contrasts with the Goodrich tire-men in that he is facing forwards, rather than to the side. Due to the direction of his vision, it appears as if he is in command of his direction. However, the appearance of the flying ties suggest the tire-men are in motion, whereas the tie of the man-in-command is unmoving and rigid. Hence, even though this salaryman is in control of his body, he is without movement. Due to permission restrictions, this painting is not reproduced in this thesis. However, this painting can be viewed online from Art|Basel at: https://www.artbasel.com/catalog/artwork/14326/Tetsuya-Ishida-faith-in-speed.

The lettering on the Goodrich tires is a textual clue to representing the human body as a tire. On the side of the wheel, one can partially make out the white words ‘Radial All Tenrain’ (which appears as a misspelling of ‘Terrain’). ‘Radial’ refers to the circular shape of the tires, while ‘All Terrain’ refers to the ability of the tire to travel on various types of ground, including rough terrain. Potentially, this is a categorisation of who does and who does not possess the ability to conquer what is in one’s way. Hence, a salaryman who is 'all terrain' is able to move. However, while the salarymen are able to move, it is not clear that they are in control of this movement since their face and gaze is not in the direction of this movement.

Naming the tire with the recognisable brand “Goodrich” is an appropriation from the real world. This reference to reality is an important quality of Surrealism to estrange from the real world in order to raise contradiction about the state of reality (Breton 1924). As a result, the appropriation of “Goodrich” is a technique to create abstraction from the real in order to generate critical distance.

The ability to move versus the control of movement is an interpretation that is supported when comparing both paintings together. Since the comparison suggests there is a theme or consistency to this idea. There are similarities between *Big Wheel* (1995) and *Faith in Speed* (1996), for example, the direction of the footprints in the latter mimics the direction of the feet in the former. And, in both paintings, the face of a man is perpendicular to the wheel. Furthermore, since both paintings appear side by side in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (2010), there is a curated intention for the viewer to analyse these paintings as a pair.

Both paintings draw attention to the distinction between what is observable (movement) versus what is internal (personal control). Hence, while a salaryman may

appear to have freedom, this is rather a false sense of their conformity as object. Whereas the salaryman who appears not to be moving retains a sense of personal control. The salaryman who is aware but not moving may be a comment to the salarymen who are not employed. This thesis thus far has assumed salarymen are employed by an organisation, since they can be depicted in organisational settings. Yet, it is also important to account for the salarymen who do not belong in an organisation. Thus, the painting may be a comment on how salarymen are limited whether they are part of an organisation or not. This raises the concern that organisational dystopia for salarymen is relative to organisational membership. In addition, it suggests that salarymen, whether employed or not, face consequences due to an organisational dystopia since their identity is tied to the organisation.

The representation of the human body as a wheel or tire suggests objectification of salarymen. Hence, these paintings also support the identification of objectification as a quality of organisational dystopia; due to this objectification, there is an alienation from one's own humanity. For instance, salarymen do not appear in control or aware of their own abilities as if they were alienated from their own body.

Movement suggests escape; since by being able to move, one can move out of dystopia. However, the freedom to move appears to be tied to objectification; and the freedom from objectification constraints the mobility of the salaryman. Therefore, this interpretation may suggest the false freedom of salarymen. This is relative to *Under the President's Umbrella* (1996), in which salarymen can move, but in the direction and control of the President.

6.4.3 Aeroplanes

Aeroplanes are a type of transportation to talk about movement. The first painting, titled *Beer Garden Take-Off* (1995, number 14; see Image 25), depicts three men with flushed faces in mid-flight. The aeroplane is a metallic grey colour with two tiny wheels and a steel propeller at the front. It is flying at an angle, heading upwards towards the top left-hand corner of the painting as if it were about to fly over the observer's head. On each wing of the aeroplane printed in white is 'MALTS' (similar to the painting *Leaving the Pub,* 1995). Within the body of the plane, encased in long cylindrical metal, is a salaryman whose head is peeking out of the gap behind the propeller.His arms extend parallel to and below the aeroplane wings to rest over the

shoulders of the salarymen on each side. To the observer's left is another flushed-faced salaryman wearing brown trousers, black shoes and a white shirt. His left leg is stepping out in front of him as if he were walking on air and his right arm is outstretched past the aeroplane wing. His red tie seems to swing. A third man, who is at the observer's right, is in a similar posture with his right leg out in front of him and his left arm outstretched past the aeroplane wing. His tie also appears to be swinging.

Image 25. *Beer Garden Take-off* (1995)

Whilst the painting is similar in tone and expression to *Leaving the Pub* (1995), for the purposes of coherence in addressing aeroplanes I examine *Beer Garden Take-off* (1995) in this section. The pleasures of drinking are shown through the flushed faces and half smiles. The movement of the ties also suggest that the aeroplane is in mid-flight; hence, one can interpret the painting as a representation of freedom to move due to the changes in the mental state brought by alcohol.

In contrast, not all salarymen are able to fly. *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996, number 25; see Image 26) features a salaryman in the body of an aeroplane with his head exposed out of the radial gap where the propeller is. This is similar to the organisation of the previous painting *Beer Garden Take-off* (1995). His arms are stretched out above the wings. This brown-haired salaryman appears tired due to the angle of his arms at the elbow as if he were going limp from holding this position.

Image 26. *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996)

The plane seems to have a history. At first it was painted white with giant black and white panda faces adorning each wing and the tail of the plane, yet, now the white paint is chipped and features ripped-off parts of each panda's face. The plane is rusting with dark brown hues set against a dull grey. The propeller also shows signs of rust and decay since the white paint has also been chipped away. From the square opening of the plane's belly, a long landing gear extends past the end of the painting. This part does not feature chipped white paint. One may interpret that the landing gear is in good condition since it has remained hidden and protected in the body of the plane while it was in flight. Another interpretation is that the landing gear has been worn out since there are no specs of white paint. Hence, the landing gear has been in constant use constraining the movement of the salaryman in flight. Nonetheless, it is a contradiction to see a plane in mid-flight with an extended landing gear.

Of course, one interpretation is to argue that, due to the boundaries of the painting as material, one cannot claim with certainty that the landing gear is attached to the ground. This is a relevant rebuttal, and also opens the interpretation of the painting of what the landing gear could be attached to if not the ground. Yet, the appearance of the landing gear suggests that flight is constrained in some form, whether in reality or in the salaryman's imagination.

Toys are objects interpreted in *Drawer* (1996) as symbolic elements of childhood. In this painting, the panda bears also suggest a reference to childhood and play. Horikiri (2010) remarks that these childish images are influenced by Tokyo Disney. Such a reference to childhood may be a psychoanalytic reference to the early influence of Freud on Surrealism (Breton 1924). Similar to *Drawer* (1996), which can be interpreted as a salaryman mourning the death of his childhood, this painting can also communicate a loss to childhood due to the decay of paint and panda images.

Cullin claims he was drawn to Ishida by this painting, in which a Japanese salaryman has a "quiet, muted look of misery upon his face" (mentioned in WorkshopLoVi 2014). It appears that he is not alone in his fate: to the observer's right is another aeroplane, although only partially in view, that also has an extended landing gear.

The companion piece to this painting is *Can't fly Anymore* 2 (1996, number 26). It does not depict an aeroplane but, as the title suggests, the painting is about flight. In this painting a rusty swinging ship, similar to those found in amusement parks, is swinging a salaryman back and forth. The panda faces seen on the aeroplane in *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996) reappear in this painting. At the top of the ride is a metal sheet attached to two poles that gives the title of the ride as 'Flyingip', though its letters have been partly worn away. Hence, the ride could have been known as 'Flying *Sh*ip' at one time. Due to image permission, this painting is not included in this thesis. However, this painting can be seen online by Artnet at: http://www.artnet.com/artists/tetsuya-ishida/a-man-cant-fly-anymore-KHc-hQDHkFsrATxD_QpsAA2.

The flying ship is anchored to the ground by two poles at either side that meet in the middle at a point beyond the top of the painting. Lying vertically along the ship is a salaryman wearing a brown suit with black shoes. His right arm is extended past his front, and his left arm is rotating backwards with the palm facing upwards. His right foot is raised above his left foot as if he were kicking. Therefore, it seems as though the salaryman is swimming rather than flying.

The contrast of flying and swimming are examples of a Surrealist contradiction (Alden 1999; Balakian 1986). In this case, the contradiction exists between the title and the painting's image; contradiction is also evident in the comparison of this painting with *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996). Similar to *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996), it seems as though the man is moving, but the bars on the flying ship suggest that this is

limited, controlled movement. Hence, although there is movement, this is not an escape from one site of dystopia to another (hopefulness). Instead, one may interpret the misery on the salaryman's face as resignation to endure organisational dystopia.

In the case of *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996) and *Can't fly Anymore* 2 (1996), it appears as though the salaryman is trapped. Since at first glance one can interpret the ability to move via flight, this is contradicted by the idea that the ability to fly is limited since the aeroplane and flying ship are attached to the ground. Hence, even in the ability to move, this is constrained. Alternatively, one may interpret the boundaries of the painting's material allow for a freedom of the salaryman to not be tied to the ground. Therefore, the emotional despair that a salaryman is limited in his freedom communicates a mental entrapment in not being able to escape an organisational dystopia.

In contrast, one can interpret through *Beer Garden Take-off* (1995) that alcohol provides 'fuel' to move or to take flight. However, given the lack of environmental context, it is uncertain whether the salarymen escape or endure the dystopia through alcoholic bliss. Hence, there is a difficulty in identifying dystopia as either a site to escape or as a place to endure since, in interpreting Ishida's paintings, it is possible it is both.

6.5 Interpretation: themes of organisational dystopia

When introducing the themes of dystopia, I focus on the paradox of dystopia. The paradox concerns whether a dystopia is a site to escape or a place to endure (see Chapter 2). In drawing on escape and endure, I recognise two themes in Ishida's representation of organisational dystopia. The first theme is the control over privacy in organisations, and the second theme is the contradiction of movement as freedom/ control or escape/endure.

The first theme to address is a totalitarian control of organisational space, particularly areas of privacy. At the extreme, one can observe the lack of privacy for the salarymen in *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996) and *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996). One can also interpret the negative consequences of this invasion on privacy as the salarymen use the toilet as a vessel in which to run away and escape from the shadow of management. One can interpret the depiction of both western and eastern toilet bowls suggests that control over private space is a unifying feature of global business; or, one

may interpret that this depiction suggests that an invasion of privacy is a quality of both traditional and westernised Japan. The intrusion of the shadowed figure in private spaces such as the toilet can be interpreted as an allusion to the control of the far reach of organisations and management. Hence, it is important for salarymen to take refuge in private spaces, where they can enact individualising, non-work identities and/or resistance through the safety of anonymity and being alone (Haslam 2012).

Such concerns about privacy are also relevant when discussing the rooftop. Since it is also a place of 'refuge' for salarymen to escape the organisation. In *Rooftop Refugee* (1996) the lone salaryman is on the edge of the roof. His body appears to be levitating above the ledge, and it is unclear if he will take off or return to work. The possibility of suicide in contradiction with the potential to return to work suggest alternative interpretations, yet also represent a dark notion that a salaryman is either resigned to work or faces suicide. Such a choice is a reason to support a look of despair.

The interpretation of a salaryman as a refugee is an important feature in Ishida's paintings since, as author Mitch Cullin argues, this is one of the ways in which Ishida's images appeal to and affect observers. Cullin (featured in WorkshopLoVi 2014) claims that the salarymen depict "this feeling of fear and desperation [that] is perhaps not unique to Ishida. We could all have it amassed somewhere deep inside us. This could be the reason why we feel uneasy or uncomfortable when we look at his work." This suggests that the freedom of interpretation allows for observers to identify with privacy as an issue. Therefore, the observer can fill in the unknowns of the painting to decide who is chasing the salaryman based on their own experience. Nonetheless, salarymen as refugees problematises the lack of protection of privacy in organisations, particularly as a site that one can go to in order to escape or endure the organisation.

Movement is also an important theme to analyse whether a salaryman can escape or endure an organisational dystopia. In the paintings *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996) and *Can't fly Anymore* 2 (1996) there is a sense that the salarymen are unable to fly away since the aeroplane or flying ship remain attached to the ground. Or, if the ship is not attached to the ground, then this interpretation is also worrisome since it suggests the salaryman is constrained in his movement even if he is not held by the organisation. Therefore, this may suggest a mental fixation on the inability to escape.

When depicting movement, the paintings can be interpreted as a communication about appearance of freedom versus ability to be free. This interpretation relates to the quality of objectification, since in the synthesis of the human body and object, it appears as though salarymen are able to move. Yet, when the salaryman is not objectified, then they are unable to move. For example, this is depicted in the comparison of *Big Wheel* (1995) and *Faith in Speed* (1996).

In *Big Wheel* (1995) and *Faith in Speed* (1996) there is a sense of movement. The salarymen, who take the shape of a wheel or tire, appear to be moving due to the swinging motion of their tie. However, the perpendicular placement of the head in relation to the body, as shown by the placement of their legs or feet, suggests that the salarymen are not in control of their movements. Hence, they are under a form of direction to move in a certain way. This is in contrast to the salaryman at the wheel of the vehicle in *Faith in Speed* (1996). The salaryman appears aware and in control of his body (since it does not appear as an object), yet he does not seem to be moving given the rigidity of his tie. This contrast suggests that objectified salarymen are able to move as part of their function when under the direction of another, such as a President. In contrast, the salaryman who is not objectified as a part of the organisation appears to have freedom over their own body. Yet, they do not have the freedom to move. Therefore, it appears as though the salarymen are conformed in some way to their work-based identity.

Objectification is present in paintings about alcohol, such as *Leaving the Pub* (1995) and *Beer Garden Take-off* (1995). For instance, in both paintings there is the conformity of a salaryman's body to a train car or an aeroplane. In the former painting, it does not appear that the salarymen are moving due to a lack of clues such as swinging ties or smoke. In the latter, it can be interpreted that the salarymen are moving since there are no apparent landing gears and there is no background setting suggesting otherwise. From these two paintings, alcohol is a contribution to the freedom of movement. However, this is arguable since in the former painting it is not conclusive that the salarymen are moving. This lack of a background can support an interpretation of salarymen who have the freedom to move, yet it can also support an interpretation in which salarymen are constrained and falsely able to move.

In comparison of the paintings, the flushed faces and half-smiles are evidence of an alternative to despair in misery that is represented in the majority of these

paintings about organisational dystopia. Due to this, alcohol is a way to endure the emotional negativity of organisational dystopia.

In addition to the complexity of escape and endure as they are depicted in privacy and movement, there is also a third consideration for mental escapes. In *Mobility Dream* (1996) one can interpret the salaryman is in a state of inemuri. In this sense, the worker is able to take a break from work; however, work is a continuous presence since it follows the salaryman into his mental world. Thus, inemuri is not a real escape from organisational dystopia since there is a return to work. In *Drawer* (1996), the salaryman appears trapped behind his desk as he internally mourns the loss of his identities, whether this is childhood (i.e. toy vehicles) or his masculinity (i.e. cigarette packet). This death of a self is not so much an escape, but rather a way to endure the organisational dystopia by removing identities that conflict with the salaryman persona.

The interpretation of these paintings together suggest that an organisational dystopia is more complex than an 'either-or' to escape or endure. Rather, an organisational dystopia is a complex imaginative space of contradiction. For instance, what is interpreted as an escape may be a false opportunity. Thus, in the tension of hopelessness and hopefulness there is a potential to value suicide as a way out of this choice. Therefore, it is important to discuss suicide and suicidal ideation as a way to escape or endure organisational dystopia.

6.6 Summary

This chapter responds to the second research question, *What are themes of organisational dystopia?* I address this question in three sections. The first section is about mental escapes. The second section is on privacy (refuge). And the third section is about depictions of movement in methods of transportation. The purpose of these three sections is to generate a discussion on the paradox of dystopia: whether one can escape a dystopia or one must endure a dystopia (Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007).

In the paintings analysed and interpreted in this chapter, there appears that an organisational dystopia is more complex than 'either-or' since the paintings feature both ways to escape and endure depending on the position of analysis and interpretation. For example, mental escapes such as inemuri are a way to momentarily escape work, yet it requires the salarymen to return to work at a moment's notice.

Another aspect is self-mortification, which is a way to cope with organisational dystopia by terminating an identity that conflicts with the salaryman identity.

Refuge from organisational life in spaces of privacy, such as a toilet or rooftop, are necessary in order to maintain a sense of individuality and anonymity. However, when the salaryman is observed in these private spaces, this invasion suspends an opportunity for freedom to enact alternatives and resistance. Hence, the closing down on these spaces for freedom contributes to the dehumanisation of salarymen.

The theme of movement gives light to the complexity of escaping or enduring an organisational dystopia. Since salarymen who appear to move are objectified in the form of a tire or aeroplane. In contrast, salarymen who retain their human form, such is one interpretation of *Faith in Speed* (1996), may not have the freedom to move. Therefore, escape by movement appears as a false freedom since those who can move are under the control of the organisation as objectified salarymen. Whereas those who retain their human form do not appear to be able to move; hence, the entrapment of salarymen may be due to their organisational identity.

7. Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This research aims to bring humanities into organisation studies (Czarniawska 2016; Czarniawska-Joerges 2006). The research was introduced as a meeting point between Critical Management Studies (CMS), dystopia, and Surrealism in order to investigate organisational dystopia through sources that open to the imagination, such as paintings. In order to study organisational dystopia, I resolved to answer two research questions: *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* and *What are themes of organisational dystopia?*

In order to respond to these research questions, I created a framework to approach the form, content, and interpretation of 19 paintings by the contemporary Surrealist artist Tetsuya Ishida. This method is sensitive to postmodernity and social construction as a position in critical research (Butler 2002; Fournier and Grey 2000). Hence, this research design acknowledges the possibility of plural and alternative interpretations similar to the position of Alvesson and Deetz (2006) who say, "We emphasise the critical edge of postmodernism. We see it as a part of a broader critical tradition which challenges the status quo and supports silenced or marginalised voices" (p. 257). Therefore, this thesis supports the under-researched experience of Japanese salarymen. Further, this specific identity is one basis to explore organisational dystopia; hence future research may locate additional or conflicting qualities and themes of organisational dystopia depending on the subjects and context of study. In order to legitimate my interpretations as a credible foundation for discussion, I account for other interpretations made by art critics and curators. And I also am transparent in my mental connections to additional culture references, such as *The Jungle,* that I identify in order to support the meaning I understand about the painting.

The previous two chapters lay the groundwork for this discussion on qualities and themes of organisational dystopia. This chapter is presented in four sections. The first section elaborates on a particular quality of organisational dystopia: objectification, or the rendering of a salaryman as an organisational function. The second section discusses the theme of control and privacy particular to spaces like a toilet and rooftop. The third section examines the paradox of dystopia (i.e. escape/

endure) as a theme in organisational dystopia. The fourth section suggests practical implications of this research. There are two practical considerations made. First, I offer curation as an alternative way to organise and present organisational research. Curation is typically a practice of organising art (Balzer 2015; Martinon 2013); yet I argue this practice is also a way to imagine an alternative to organisation research publications and conferences. Second, I discuss the opportunity of using the framework I designed in this research as a basis to further research in other business fields beyond organisation studies, such as leadership and finance. I also suggest that paintings are a way to challenge traditional education methods by creating a space for silent reflection and awareness.

To start this discussion, I turn to the topic of art for organisation studies in order to summarise and illustrate how art can offer further insights into a dystopian imagination.

7.2 Art for organisation studies: accessing a dystopian imagination

The imagination is an area for organisation research. Academics such as Gabriel (1991, 1995, 1999) indicate the importance of fantasy as a realm of unmanaged emotional freedom, while Boje (2003, 2008) highlights stories as narratives of organisational meaning and learning. From fantasies to stories, a natural next step to addressing imagination is art. Surrealist paintings are a specific expression of imagination that presents a detailed, frozen image. Unlike the fluidity with which fantasies and stories progress, the halting of time in a painting allows the observer to focus on detail in-depth. Whereas detail can be missed in fantasies and stories due to the extended sequence of psychoanalysis or written narratives.

When a Surrealist artist creates an image, they are organising a specific, meaningful visual. Rather than psychoanalytical methods to examine the unconscious (Freud 2015), the veristic style of Surrealism is a space for reflection and comment (Bell 1984). The painting also differs from a story since the latter hinges on the movement from one event to the next. Therefore, there are additional dimensions to storytelling, such as the passing of time, that are not applicable to the frozen moment of painting (Zemach 1975). Hence how meaning is learned from a story is different from a painting; therefore, a study of paintings requires a different research design. In brief, the frozen image allows the observer to be closer to details that may be lost in a

sequence of moments, such as in a story format, ethnography, or interview (Zemach 1975).

The visual communication of paintings contrasts with the written and spoken language of text, stories and typical qualitative research methods. This is because written and spoken language, reliant as they are on signs and structure, act as representations of ideas that develop within individual mental landscapes (Weick 1989). In contrast, paintings do not require signs, since the mental image is revealed directly on canvas. (Of course, paintings can include signs, such as in the painting *Beer Garden Take-off* (1995), in which the word 'MALTS' is seen on the wings of an aeroplane.) Therefore art, as an externally placed image, is available for an audience to access. This means art and language have different reference points for their representation, and are contrasting processes through which to understand meaning (Zemach 1975). As a result, art can confirm or challenge meanings that are understood through language (Danto 1981; Goodman 1968). Since the majority of organisational works originate in language, there is a place for images to upend or support what is understood through the written or spoken account of work, management, and organisation. To elaborate, paintings do not require language (Danto 1981). Paintings can be understood without language; rather, language is a system through which to 'translate' what one person interprets from a painting in order to share their interpretation with others (Sontag 1964). Therefore, paintings may be a way to cross barriers of language.

Paintings also offer a unique experience in contrast to other images such as photographs. Photographs are images that are inherently tied to reality, even when a photograph is manipulated or falsified (Perez 1998; Price 1994). Painting, as a practice of representation, is an abstraction of reality that only comes into fruition as an image since it does not exist in reality. This means painting has a different relationship to imagination, which is necessary to have access to in order to understand organisational dystopia. Since dystopia is based in the imagination. Since photographs are constrained to the empirical observations of reality, they cannot offer an internal investigation into imagination in the way that paintings are able to (Perez 1998; Price 1994).

Hence, what I argue here is that paintings offer a different set of conditions in which to examine the imagination that conditions of language and photographs do not

offer. This is why painting was deemed by the Surrealists to be the highest cultural endeavour, since paintings do not conform to the rationalities of linguistics or the reality of photographs (Breton 1930; Morise 1924; Waldberg 1965). Thus, it is due to an estrangement from reality that a freedom to create can depict contradiction, mystery and the internal mind (Alden 1999; Balakian 1986; Brodskaïa 2012).

Freedom of the imagination in pictorial form allows the artist to express how they see the world, and to share this depiction with others as external material. This means that paintings carry significant cultural and contextual meaning. Hence a painting can be used to propel its observers into 'revolution' through abstraction and estrangement from reality in order to unsettle normative views (Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes 1925b).

Organisational scholars have applauded Surrealism as a means of critiquing rationality and conformity through contradiction and imagination. However, such scholars, including Carr and Hancock (2003), Corbett (2009), and Zanetti (2007), have not addressed the paintings by the Surrealists. Surrealist paintings, as this thesis has demonstrated, are imaginative, pictorial elements that allow an audience to gaze at critical representations about organisational life. Thus, this thesis evidences paintings as an important and unique resource through which to address the imaginative notion of organisational dystopia.

Paintings are a rich data source unique from language and photographs. Paintings are also an alternative to fantasy (Gabriel 1999) and stories (Boje 2003, 2008). Ergo, paintings are a way forward for organisation studies to investigate the imagination. In order to demonstrate the relevance of paintings as a way forward, I present three contributions of this study. The first contribution is a discussion on objectification as a quality of organisational dystopia. The second contribution is a conversation about the control of private spaces as it affects alienation. The third contribution argues against the binary of a paradox of dystopia in order to suggest that an organisational dystopia is more complex in its nature. These contributions are significant to problematising the progress of organisational labour.

7.3 Beyond subjugation: a dystopian quality of objectification

When addressing the research question, *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* one characteristic is objectification. Objectification is the perception in

which an individual is perceived and/or treated as an object (Nussbaum 1995). Organisational scholars look at the dark side of subjectivity since objectification is disregarded as an 'imaginative state' or 'managerial utopia' (e.g. Deetz 2003; Grant and Shields 2010; Knights and Willmott 1989). This is not to say that organisational studies has missed the notion of objectification. Townley (1993) draws on Foucault in order to frame Human Resource Management (HRM) as techniques and disciplines that seek to render the individual as an object of knowledge. In her research, Townley (1993) proposes, "Through mechanisms of registration, assessment and classification - areas of study often neglected or dismissed as technical or administrative procedures - it becomes possible to illustrate how a body of knowledge operates to objectify those on whom it is applied" (p. 541). In the paintings I study, I identify organisational practices that draw knowledge from an individual (e.g. interviews and tests) that is used to 'package' a salaryman as an organisational object. The paintings also show the emotional impact of objectification on alienation, particularly how the standardisation and objectification of salarymen influences quality of life. Thus, the paintings provide support to a theory of objectification while simultaneously fashioning a call-to-action to prevent this objectification by invoking pictorial characteristics of colour, mood and shape.

Some dismiss objectification as "not an accomplished reality" (Grant and Shields 2010:63). Hence objectification is resigned to the realm of imagination. However, the work of Townley (1993) suggests otherwise; HRM increasingly classifies and categorises further information and new knowledge about workers. While Townley (1993) provides a means by which we can conceive of objectification as a possibility through managerial practice, she refrains from reflecting on the consequences of objectification and how objectification can be studied beyond a theoretical realm.

The analysis and interpretation of paintings about objectification in Chapter 5 rely on a visual motif in the synthesis of the body and object. For example, he representation of the interviewers as microscopes in *Interview* (1998). Objectification is also reflected in paintings like *Conveyor-belt People* (1996) where salarymen are depicted as products along an assembly line. This visual representation is a way to draw communicate objectification.

In Ishida's paintings objectification is depicted as a dark process in an organisational dystopia. Practices of objectification are similar to those identified by Townley (1993). For example, both Ishida and Townley (1993) draw reference to interviews and assessments as means of rendering the worker an object of knowledge. Yet, Ishida represents detail that is missed in Townley's (1993) general argument of HRM. For example, Ishida depicts synoptic observation in *Interview* (1998). Ishida also depicts the mediation of assessment by tools, which adds to the alienation and objectification since humans are not treated as humans. This is evidenced in *Exercise Equipment* (1997) and *Conveyor-belt People* (1996). The removal of humanity concludes in *Cargo* (1997), which represents salarymen transformed into packages, which is a fitting end to assembly and production.

While objectification may be a 'managerial utopia' (Grant and Shields 2010), the pictorial qualities such as the dark colours of black and navy, coupled with the heavy circular curves and tones of gloom and fear, suggest objectification is a 'salaryman dystopia'. Hence, since objectification is presented in an organisational dystopia, objectification is problematised as a threat to humanity (Bonnett 2004; Booker 1994; Claeys 2010; Hillegas 1967; Manguel 2003; Parker 2005; Rhodes 2004, 2007; Vieira 2010; Zamyatin 1922). For instance, in *Exercise Equipment* (1997), the meat hooks represent a treatment of a salaryman as an animal to slaughter. In addition to the dehumanisation of salarymen as animals, the depiction of salarymen along a conveyor-belt is a metaphor of salarymen as products of managerial intervention. Through observation and assessment, the salarymen are rendered objects. It is important to draw attention to processes of objectification in order to emancipate salarymen or other workers in similar conditions, to reflect and resist such ends (Alvesson and Willmott 1992).

My analysis and interpretation of Ishida's paintings raise additional concern about objectification as a consequence that transcends the space of an organisation. In *Cargo* (1997) the packaged salarymen get off a train. The salarymen are not at work, yet they exhibit the traits of objectification. Hence, objectification is tied to a salaryman identity, which exists even outside the space of an organisation. This embodied expression of objectification stresses that work identities also exist in spaces and times in which non-work identities could be free. This is similar to the criticism and ethical concerns around the incorporation of work into personal lives. Therefore,

this painting by Ishida is one way to visualise the impact of work identities outside of the organisation.

Another concern is that objectification affects salarymen of different organisational ranks. This is evidenced in a comparison between *Section Chief's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building* (1996) and *Worker's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building* (1996). In both paintings, salarymen of different rank face objectification since both salarymen take the shape of a chair. This suggests that the techniques and discipline of human resource management not only help management to manage workers better, but can also be used to entrap managers into their own systems of classification, performance and surveillance so that they too are also rendered organisational objects. For instance, in the episode "The Six Million Dollar Mon" of *Futurama*, accountant and bureaucrat Hermes conducts performance reviews of the staff at Planet Express. However, he concludes that he is the worst-performing employee, and thus fires himself. In this sense, performance reviews are a system that envelop their creator and practitioner, and in consequence can objectify and dispel their supposed bureaucratic master.

Ishida's paintings can be interpreted using Nussbaum's (1995) philosophical essay on objectification. Nussbaum (1995) describes three characteristics of objectification: the worker as a 'tool', the workers (as objects) are interchangeable, and the worker is denied their own subjectivity. In *Exercise Equipment* (1997) and *Conveyor-belt People* (1996), there is a representation of salarymen as organisational tools of inspection due to the symbolism of microscopes and goggles. Due to the repetitive manner of observation, and the metaphor of salarymen as products of organisations, one can interpret that salarymen are interchangeable. This interchangeability of salarymen can also be interpreted in the ambiguous repetition of salarymen represented in paintings; the lack of individual features suggest one salaryman is no different from another salaryman (Horikiri 2010). The sameness of salarymen is a manner of objectification since there is a removal of subjectivity (individuality).

The paintings are a way to reflect on the human consequences of objectification. Objectification constitutes a threat to the human side of work since it reduces the person to a functional object. Objectification removes individual creativity, imagination, impulsivity, and improvisation. Objectification is also the treatment of

humans as non-humans, like animals. This analysis of objectification is sensitive to Marx (2007[1884]), who claimed alienation is a labourer reduced to “his animal functions” (p. 73) and alienated from his own creation (Wallimann 1981). When Ishida's paintings are analysed with this sensitivity to Marx, this is a foundation to interpret the consequence of objectification on alienation, as well as emotional expressions of despair and anxiety. The paintings, as an estrangement from reality, are a space to reflect and critique on the internal or affective consequences of objectification from a salaryman perspective.

It is ironic that paintings, while a way to observe consequences of objectification, is also an objectification of a subject. Since a painting is also a material object in addition to its qualities of representation, estrangement, and mental image (see Chapter 1). As a result, Ishida does not escape the objectification of salarymen when he transfers his imagination onto a tangible canvas for observation. Painting as objectification is an interesting tangential consideration to an analysis of worker objectification; it is also a fascinating ontological concern about painting. This irony of critiquing objectification while also objectifying salarymen on canvas is also a relevant discussion about culture production and reproduction. For instance, creative institutions that produce popular culture that is critical of organisations may also be objectifying their own personal experience, which is acceptable so as to support the organisation (Rhodes and Parker 2008). Hence, objectification is a concern in the production of material about organisations.

Objectification is a quality of organisational dystopia that is appearing in real, contemporary organisations. For instance, at Three Square Market in Wisconsin, United States, employees sign up to receive microchip implants from their bosses. The implants act as identification cards to open doors, use copy machines and office computers, share business cards and store medical and payment data (Miller 2017). The concern is that these technological improvements to access, monitor and surveil workers will provide increasing knowledge about workers, which can be abused or used as information to objectify employees. In parallel, technological improvements also reduce and remove opportunities for resistance and non-work that can challenge performance and productivity. For example, in Florida, Celebration Hospital has installed radio frequency identification devices in the badges of nearly 100 nurses and staff in order to track and monitor their movements and how long they visit each room

in order to satisfy patient needs. The data has already influenced the layout and construction of nursing stations (Conn 2014).

In addition to tracking physical movements, companies that offer ways to surveil workers with computers are growing in number and size. Companies such as oDesk and ELance provide software that keeps track of how long workers spend at a computer and which web pages they visit. oDesk takes screenshots of worker's computers are taken in order to verify hours worked; then, workers are given these screenshots before they are passed on to their managers. If the employee wants the image blanked out, then it costs the employee one-sixth of their hourly wage (Hardy 2011). Such managerial interventions pass on the cost of privacy onto the worker and can punish workers who are performing well, although they may not abide to the standards of productivity or organisational norms of work.

In the future, there is also a possibility of a cyborg transformation. While I do not treat the paintings by Ishida as science fiction, the relation between human and object is likewise portrayed in a 'cybernetic organism'. While existing in the realms of science fiction, cyborgs differ from the interpretation of salarymen objectification in that they retain aspects of agency, choice and free thinking (Wood 1998), whereas organisational objects are functions. Nonetheless, the imaginative aspect of cyborgs is a phenomenon that may come to fruition. For example, the U.S. military is researching implants that will allow the human brain to communicate with computers and machines in order to restore or improve human activity (Browne 2016). This suggests that some ideas which were once fiction are becoming reality. Since this is one such case of the imagination becoming real, then it is important to also consider the aspects of organisational dystopia that may become real, too.

Besides the synthesis of human and object into modified versions of workers, there is also a rising fear in the replacement of human workers by robots. Robots and technological improvements are machines and mechanisms that have begun to eliminate factory workers and other manufacturing jobs (e.g. Rendall 2016; Wakefield 2016). Yet, factory labour is not the only form of labour that is under threat by technology. Creative labour, such as conductors of orchestras, can be replaced by a robot named YuMi that can direct its 'arms' in rehearsals (Wang 2017). Or teachers may be replaced by artificial intelligence robots (von Radowitz 2017). Hence, the

replacement of human labour by robots is a concern for white collar labour, including salarymen and also those in creative positions such as conductors and teachers.

The previous examples feature increasing developments in technology, particularly the extremes to which worker surveillance can lead to increased knowledge about a person, and thus objectification. Yet, there are also risks associated with the mechanisms that seek to monitor and manage productivity and performance. Yahoo! Quarterly Performance Reviews managers are required to rank employees; the rankings are then assembled on a bell curve depending on the percentage of goals achieved or missed. In 2016 a lawsuit was filed against the company by a leading Yahoo! editor against company bosses who had manipulated the performance review system in order to discriminate against and fire employees. Since even when the employees were performing well, managers were still required to rank some of them low (Feloni and Gillett 2016). In addition, it is alleged that performance reviews were used to legitimate mass layoffs when Yahoo! sought to increase its revenues (Goel 2016). Another example is factories, such as Hormel Foods in Fremont, Nebraska, United States, where the speed of the line dramatically increased without a rise in employee numbers. “In 2002, Hormel’s production lines were running at 900 pigs per hour; by 2007, they were running at 1,350 pigs per hour. That’s a 50% increase in five years, but the number of workers on the line increased by only about 15%” (Genoways 2014). As a result, there was a rise in grisly employee accidents and injuries and product recalls. This highlighted the danger of increasing performance and productivity with little consideration for employee or customer safety. By drawing on these two examples, there are real consequences to abusive performance systems that can alienate workers from their accomplishments and render workers as functions. Hence, there is a concern of a future objectification of labour.

In sum, I interpret Ishida's paintings as representations of objectified salarymen. The salaryman as a ‘thing’ or animal is a quality of organisational dystopia (Nussbaum 1995). Objectification is achieved through processes such as interviews and tests, which resonates with the work by Townley (1993) on HRM that renders a worker an object of knowledge. Objectification, while ignored as a ‘managerial utopia’ (Grant and Shields 2010), is depicted in Ishida's paintings as a salaryman-specific organisational dystopia. In looking at contemporary organisations, there is a concern of worker objectification due to technological interventions, cyborg fantasies and

performance reviews. Thus, Ishida's paintings are calls-to-action that use emotional and visual elements to provoke audience reflection on organisational and managerial developments before reaching a point of no return.

7.4 Totalitarian control of organisational spaces: an inescapable dystopia

When addressing the research question, *What are themes of organisational dystopia?*, there is a theme of organisational control over private spaces, such as the toilet and rooftop. Organisational control of space has a known dark side. One example is Erving Goffman's concept of 'total institutions', which describes the ways in which an organisation is in control over the entire life of an individual, such as a mental institution (Goffman 2009[1961]). A second example is Foucault's (1995) panopticon, in which an observer surveils everyone, but everyone cannot see the observer. Clegg (2006) remarks that organisation studies have neglected to address or resolve such institutions which have been involved in crimes against humanity. Yet a dark side to the control of organisational space does not necessarily have to research history. Rather, a dark side to organisational control exists in its encroachment on privacy. 'Privacy' is an ambiguous term in organisation studies that refers to non-work spaces, activities, identities and relationships (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999; Alvesson and Willmott 2012; Fleming and Spicer 2007). Privacy, though categorised as non-work, nonetheless can occur at work. One example of privacy is when a manager answers the phone; it is his or her partner asking to bring home dinner. Another is when an intern takes a break from work in order to check his or her Facebook feed. In both cases, these everyday occurrences are some of the ways in which private life enters into 'public' (work) life. However, there are other types of privacy, such as going to the toilet to relieve oneself, or going to the rooftop to be alone, that are of a different nature, due to the spaces they occupy and the activities performed. Such examples of privacy are usually unmentioned in organisation studies, perhaps because they are taboo. Yet, I interpret an importance in addressing these silenced spaces since they are a type of space impacted by managerial and organisational control. And when this privacy is encroached upon, this contributes to despair, anxiety and alienation. Therefore, the interpretation of these selected paintings exhibit an importance to maintaining privacy at work so there is a space for individual freedom.

There are two discussions in the literature in which I situate my interpretation of privacy in order to contribute to organisation studies. First, there is the dualism of the public/private. The distinction between public and private is ambiguously divided as non-work versus work spheres (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999; Alvesson and Willmott 2012; Fleming and Spicer 2007). This categorisation does to complexities and grey areas in which meanings of public and private conflict. Increasingly, private selves are part of organisational life, such revealing sexuality and relationships with colleagues (Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott 2009; Clegg and Kornberger 2006). Thus, within organisations it is a struggle to delineate the areas in which an employee can engage in public or private identities; often such areas are differentiated by the extent of supervision, visibility and activity (Clegg and Kornberger 2006). In many cases, the degree of privacy one might possess is a hierarchical privilege. For example, in *The Good Fight,* the young lawyer Maia is told to join other new lawyers at the hot desks in the centre of the office floor while along the sides are private offices for senior staff and named partners. Another example is the cubicle office space, designed by Robert Propst, who originally envisioned cubicles as a way for individuals to customise their level of privacy and select the height of the cubicle walls in order to interact with colleagues. Instead, 'cubicle farms' shrink the workspace for each individual in order to cost-effectively place more employees in a single space while still providing some semblance of privacy in an otherwise compact, crowded space (Blakemore 2017).

Besides public versus private spaces, there is also the complexity of enacting the private self while at work. For example, Fleming and Sturdy (2009) refer to 'neo-normative control' in which management embraces "private and authentic aspects of employee selves" so as to create "a freer work environment" (p. 579, 580). However, as Fleming (2009) argues, the increasingly normative celebrations of individualism become qualities of organisational culture: "sexuality, lifestyle, fun, play and so forth are not individual characteristics of isolated subjects, but aspects of an elemental communism" (p. 48). Hence, what may be depicted as individual freedom to enact authentic private selves may also be interpreted as a collective organisational conformity, in which private identities are public characteristics.

The toilet and rooftop are areas for privacy, and are also places to enact alternative or resistant identities. The toilet and rooftop are two sites within an

organisation that are spaces of non-supervision and non-visibility so anonymous activity can take place. Unlike qualities of sexuality, relationships and interests that one may decide to transition from private to public, the toilet and rooftop are spaces that are important to maintain as private. The importance of maintaining privacy to enact private selves is important in order to protect individual identities from objectification and from becoming public.

Second, there is also the literature on control of organisational space. Control of organisational space is important as a way of regulating and constructing worker identity (Baldry and Hallier 2010; Hancock and Spicer 2011). One example of control is surveillance technology to track employee movement; this is similar to the previous case at Celebration Hospital where nurses were tracked (Conn 2014). The control of organisational space is also significant in maintaining power over opportunities of resistance (Taylor and Spicer 2007). Therefore, even when private selves are enacted within organisational spaces, they are controlled and normalised as work (Fleming and Spicer 2007). When the control of private space is extreme, such as the salaryman being chased in the toilet, this can be interpreted as a dystopian theme of organisations that leads to anxiety, despair, and alienation.

Privacy is a necessary condition to remain anonymous; therefore, what happens in a toilet or on a roof are intended to remain private (personal). One may want to protect non-salaryman identities, to resist the organisation, or to rest from work. The theme of control over privacy are represented in three paintings: *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996), *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996), and *Rooftop Refugee* (1996). The term ‘refugee’ highlights the need for private spaces in order to find ‘refuge' away from the stresses and constraints of work; another interpretation of ‘refugee’ connotes that a person is in movement away from a negative event or circumstance, such as war. In both cases, refuge is an important concept to relate to organisational dystopia since it suggests a need to escape.

The toilet is an important space to escape work. In *Psychology in the Bathroom*, Haslam (2012) examines the “quiet, hidden and deeply private” human experience in the bathroom (p. 3). He argues that the bathroom is more than a site of excretion and urination, since it is also a place of anonymity, privacy and freedom for communication (e.g. stall graffiti), relationships (e.g. sexual relations) and leisure (e.g.

bathroom books). Hence the bathroom is a site to break away from routines, work and activities.

Toilets are also an important site in the research process. Button (2007) reflected on his experience of observing security officers, "One wants to blend in, and taking notes in front of them [those being observed] could be off-putting. Therefore, whenever possible I would…go to the toilet and write rough notes and reminders" (p. 26). The significance of having a break in a private toilet indicates that the toilet is a long-established space for retaining or enacting alternative identities. For instance, Ditton (1977) remarked on his ethnography of a bakery, "But I was stuck 'on the line', and had nowhere to retire to privately to jot things down. Eventually, the ease of using innocently provided lavatory cubicles occurred to me. Looking back, all my notes for that third summer were on Bronco toilet paper!" (p. 5).

Private spaces like a toilet or rooftop are significant for many reasons. For the workers, it is a space to enact a non-work self and to play in the freedom of non-supervision: to smoke, to swear and to escape (Dale and Burrell 2008). It is also a space to break up the performance of work, such as researchers who require a moment alone to catch up on field notes before returning to their observation (e.g. Button 2007; Ditton 1977). Thus privacy, and the continued promise of privacy, is important in stabilising opportunities to freely engage with non-work identities and activities of resistance to escape objectification and alienation.

Ishida's paintings of the toilet depict the encroachment of management and organisational domination into private spaces. The shadows and extended hand in *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996) and *Toilet Refugee* 2 (1996) are representations of this encroachment. When such private spaces are violated, salarymen show signs of anxiety and fear that emotionally criticises the supervision of privacy. Therefore, the monitoring of private spaces at work is a salaryman dystopia when invaded by managerial control and monitoring.

There are real concerns regarding toilet privacy in the workplace. In late 2014, the UK Employment Relations Minister Jo Swinson raised concerns about a call centre deducting pay from the salary of workers who left their tasks and went to the toilet (BBC 2014b). In 2008 the supermarket chain Lidl was under investigation for surveilling and recording staff trips to the toilet and women's menstrual cycles: "Female workers who have their periods may go to the toilet now and again, but to

enjoy this privilege they should wear a visible headband" (Connolly 2008). Such concerns for privacy in the toilet can be traced as far back as *Modern Times*, when Charlie Chaplin clocks out of work in order to take a cigarette break in the bathroom. As he smokes, the wall transitions into a video in which the boss catches Chaplin smoking, and bellows, "Hey, quit stalling! Get back to work! Go on!"

Besides the toilet, the rooftop is also depicted as a private space. In *Rooftop Refugee* (1996) the lone worker is alone on a rooftop ledge, and his body is confined to a literal staircase with a large red intercom. The loneliness depicted in the salaryman's expression and his levitating feet on the rooftop ledge can be interpreted either as a possible suicide, or as a despair in returning to work. The rooftop is an important area for privacy that is taken-for-granted in organisational life. In "Last Cigarette Ever", an episode of *How I Met Your Mother,* Marshall heads to the roof of his office building for a break. He meets his boss, who first asks if he is going to jump, but then offers him a cigarette: "That's too bad. You know what I miss, Jeffrey? Getting to know someone over a smoke. People are so interchangeable now, but you share a [cigarette] butt with somebody, you got a real bond." The roof depicted as a location in which to form private relationships or, until Marshall arrived, to be alone away from work. This is a similar interpretation that can be made from Ishida's *Rooftop Refugee* (1996).

The rooftop is increasingly brought under organisational control. In June 2017, Google announced its new London offices would have a roof garden and running track (Scott 2017). At Amazon's headquarters in London, there is also a rooftop garden with tables and benches to discuss work (Shead 2017b). At Adobe's new London office, there is a 150 metre rooftop running track and table tennis facilities (Shead 2017a). This rooftop, once a refuge for privacy, is a site of control in order to regulate and entrap worker productivity and identity.

Thus, one important theme of organisational dystopia is the control of private spaces, such as a toilet or rooftop. When that privacy is encroached upon, whether through observation or surveillance by supervision, as represented by an extended, shadow, or intercom button, this can lead to alienation and despair. Therefore, the private spaces where a salaryman can enact alternative identities or resistance is threatened by this control. Thus, my interpretation of Ishida's paintings draws attention to under-researched areas within an organisational while adding to the

existent literature on privacy in suggesting that it is important that some spaces maintain their element of privacy. This interpretation is relevant to contemporary organisations, which increasingly manage the toilet and rooftop as a site of organisational control.

7.5 Coping with, and escaping from, organisational dystopia

In response to the second research question, *What are themes of organisational dystopia?*, I address a paradox of dystopia. This paradox of dystopia concerns whether a dystopia is a site to escape or endure (Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007). I interpret Ishida's organisational dystopia specific to salarymen as evidence of both escape (hopefulness) and endure (hopelessness). Hence, I suggest that an organisational dystopia does not conform to a binary of 'either-or', rather, an organisational dystopia exhibits qualities of hopefulness and hopelessness. Thus, an organisational dystopia may be better understood as an 'and-both' of escape and endure. Therefore, my contribution to the concept of organisational dystopia draws on its complex nature, and exposes the different ways a salaryman might escape or cope with organisational dystopia, including sleep, alcohol, and suicide.

The first way to escape or endure organisational dystopia is sleep. Ishida's painting *Mobility Dream* (1996) fixes the observer to view a sleeping salaryman at his desk. His pacific, calm expression is juxtaposed by the movement of the feet around his office, which appear to carry the office and his work with him. Sleeping at work or napping while on the job are examples of insubordination and worker misbehaviour in western culture (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999). Research on sleep has not been a rich area of concern for organisation studies (Valtonen et. al. 2017). In the work of Valtonen et. al. (2017), sleep and wakefulness are presented as two states in tension that require management so as to 'maintain rhythm' with academic activity. Hancock (2008) argues sleep is vital because it is a condition for productivity and creativity at work; sleep is a formal activity that is organised into one's day, and sleep is also an aspect of consumption (e.g. purchasing goods for better sleep). Due to this, organisations address sleep as a responsibility for its workers, such as setting up organisational programs and encouraging workers to get enough sleep to be productive at work the next day.

Focusing on Japanese salarymen is a way to enrich the current knowledge on sleep in organisations. In Japan, napping during work is a culturally accepted activity since it supposes worker productivity: "You must be working yourself to exhaustion" (Rousseau 2016). The practice of sleeping during work is called 'inemuri'. "On a certain level, inemuri is not considered sleep at all. Not only is it seen as being different from night-time sleep in bed, it is also viewed differently from taking an afternoon nap or power nap" (Steger 2016). Inemuri is akin to daydreaming since a salaryman can return to work immediately when called. In this sense, inemuri is lightly daydreaming on a train or at one's desk without drawing attention to oneself since a salaryman does not lay down, snore, or use a pillow. Hence, "In Japan, where workers get less sleep on work nights than those in other countries, more and more companies are encouraging employees to sleep on the job, convinced that it leads to better work performance" (McCurry 2014). Thus, while in the west sleeping on the job is regarded as organisational misbehaviour, in Japan inemuri is encouraged.

The painting *Mobility Dream* (1996) sparks discussion on the value and importance of sleep for surviving work, as well as using sleep as a way to cope with organisational dystopia. Dreaming is a private escape into one's own mind. In my interpretation of the painting, the legs walking under the lifted office walls depict how work follows the salaryman into his dreams. Hence, one can interpret this painting as a false escape from work since, due to inemuri, the salaryman can be recalled to work at any moment. Another interpretation is that work follows into one's dream. This alternative explanation can be elucidated by Freud. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud (2015) argued that reality and dreams are divorced, yet dreams are derived from reality (like how Surrealist paintings are estranged from reality). In consequence, reality limits the conditions for possible dreams since the reference to reality is a necessary constant. As a result, the imagination is limited in its possibilities; just as Surrealism is limited in its diversity since there is a presence of reality even in its estrangement. This limitation to Surrealism has been missed by organisation scholars (e.g. Carr and Zanetti 2000; Zanetti 2007). Hence, it is important to mention it now since Surrealism is not without its constraints.

Inemuri is a way to endure organisational dystopia since it is an opportunity to escape into dreams. Another way to cope with organisational dystopia is consuming alcohol. Drinking, whether on the job or drinking too much, is also regarded as

organisational misbehaviour (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999) since drinking alcohol is also a part of a non-work (private) life. In the television show *Family Guy,* Peter and his friends are frequently seen at the local bar called The Drunken Clam. In another television show, *Cheers*, which is the name of the Boston bar, is frequented by the locals in order to socialise and relax. In a different television show, *The Newsroom*, after a difficult news segment or taping, the news team gather at a nearby club to drink and hang out. When the news team drink together, they gossip about coworkers and complain about colleagues. In this way, drinking is an important activity to relax from the workday. And when drinking takes place with colleagues, or other salarymen, the public (work) self interacts with the private (non-work) self as significant events are retold and relived. This suggests how drinking can turn lonely, apathetic salarymen, as seen in Ishida's *Locomotive Man* (1995), into a group of content, smiling men in *Leaving the Pub* (1995) and *Beer Garden Take-off* (1995).

The paintings do not feature any alcohol, yet it can be interpreted that the salarymen have been drinking due to the clues of the title and the signs on the train cars or plane. Drinking alcohol is an important activity, though it tends to lack scrutiny in organisation studies, except when it concerns deviance on the job (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999) or alcoholism (Bacharach, Bamberger, and Sonnenstuhl 2002; Seeman and Anderson 1983). In the case of alcoholism, experience-based research into alcohol consumption and its relation to work is still lacking. Therefore, paintings are a way to address alcohol as it relates to work since workers may be uncomfortable with speaking about their experience. This is supported by the paintings since alcohol consumption is alluded to and not an observable act. Alcohol is a way to cope with organisational dystopia since a salaryman can escape work by heading to the bar and interact with other salarymen; this latter activity is important since Ishida criticises the decline in human-to-human interactions (Horikiri 2010; Yokoyama 2010). Therefore, one can interpret alcohol not only as a way to cope with organisational dystopia, but also as a way to repair or maintain human relations in a dehumanising organisation.

In addition to inemuri and alcohol, suicide and suicidal ideation is a third way to escape and endure organisational dystopia. Suicide has a unique cultural history in Japan, which is reason for the difference in problematisation of suicide in comparison to western culture. In contrast to westerns society, suicide is generally more 'tolerated' than 'wronged', and suicide can also be reasoned as a morally responsible act in Japan

(Di Marco 2016). For example, suicide was honourable for samurai and kamikaze pilots (Di Marco 2016); and since salarymen are “industrial samurai” (Thomas 2013:129), then there is a connection to suicide as resolution for salarymen.

I interpret suicide or suicidal ideation in Ishida's paintings. For instance, in *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996), the plane appears clamped to the earth, meaning the salaryman ‘can’t fly anymore’. In *Can't fly Anymore* 2 (1996), the salaryman lying on a swinging carnival ship ‘can’t fly anymore’ since the ship is attached to the ground. While the paintings depict salarymen in flight, this flight is not real since the salarymen do not move. One way to make sense of this is through reference to coin-operated children’s rides when, on the presentation of currency, the child is able to move forwards and backwards in a controlled manner. Though this child's ride is brief and comes to an end.

The anchoring of movement adds to a level of despair at the inability to escape the dystopia by moving out of it. Thus, what I observe is akin to the ending of *Brave New World*: “ending is better than mending” (Huxley 1946:49). Therefore, rather than present a solution for resolving a dystopia, the 'ending' by suicide is a way to expel oneself in perhaps honourable terms. While suicide is not observed in the paintings, hence I realise suicide is one interpretation, the levitation of the salaryman on the rooftop in *Rooftop Refugee* (1996) alludes to a possible next event in which he falls to his death. One of reason why I interpret suicide in Ishida's paintings is because the artist died by suicide after he was hit by a train in 2005 (Batten 2013; WorkshopLoVi 2014). Hence, in recognition of the artist’s death, there is a possible connection in interpreting the internal mental state of Ishida on canvas to his suicide.

Suicide and suicidal ideation are one interpretation of Ishida's paintings. Yet, this interpretation is important to discuss since suicide is a problem of organisational life. In Japan, ‘karoshi’, or work-related death or suicide due to overwork and stress, is a growing phenomenon in the workplace (Fifield 2016). Kawanishi (2008) claims that an increase in performativity measures, economic recession and a corporate-centred society are factors that contribute to a rise in karoshi. In addition, a history of suicide as resolution, from samurai ‘seppuku’ to kamikaze pilots in World War II, are part of a cultural narrative that tolerates suicide (Kawanishi 2008). Paintings are a way to address the sociocultural dimension of suicide specific to time and place, such as the affective and internal experience of suicidal ideation in salarymen.

Suicide and death are “hugely under-researched” in organisation studies (Cullen 2014:42; Waters 2015; Waters, Karanikolos and McKee 2016). Paintings are a way to address depression, despair, death, and suicide since paintings are a way to examine the internal and imaginative dimension of these entities. In addition, paintings are a way to examine information about death and suicide that is not easily communicated in language. By researching organisational dystopia, the interpretation of suicide is an relevant since, at least in western cultures, suicide is an extreme resolution to despair and suffering.

Suicide is not the only type of death I observe in Ishida's paintings. In *Drawer* (1996) one can interpret the internal mourning of a death to a non-work identity. The drawer acts as a coffin and toy vehicles may suggest the death to childhood or youthful personality and interests. This could suggest a salaryman as having grown up. Or another interpretation is that the salaryman is mourning the death of his masculine identity due to the cigarettes. Hence, what could be interpreted instead of suicide is a ‘mortification of the self’. Erving Goffman (2009[1961]) used this term to highlight the conditions in which inmates and mental patients were stripped of their individual identity within total institutions, a concept previously discussed. The ‘mortification of the self’ deals with ‘abnormal persons’, or those struck with a mental illness or deviance, through practices such as fingerprinting, haircutting, and numbering of persons. Thus, there is a fear that a mortification of the self is not excluded to abnormal people; rather, this affects salarymen as well. Ergo, a sense of organisations of work as total institution is a factor in the death to one's non-work identities. Since the non-work identities conflict with the salaryman identity, which places the corporation as the centre of meaning (Dasgupta 2000, 2013; Hidaka 2010).

Inemuri, alcohol, and suicide (or suicidal ideation) are three entities in which to endure or escape organisational dystopia. These offer a way to momentarily escape dystopia, which also suggests they are a way to endure the suffering in an organisation. Hence, the paradox of dystopia, in classifying a dystopia as ‘either-or’, excludes the possibility that an organisational dystopia is a complex site of ‘and-both’. In this way, a dystopia is not only hopefulness or hopelessness, but rather a tension in moving between hopefulness or hopelessness.

In analysing the themes of organisational dystopia, I recognise that dystopia possesses both opportunities for escape and also means to endure. Therefore, an

organisational dystopia is complex since it has both hopefulness and hopelessness. Inemuri, alcohol, and suicide (or suicidal ideation) are themes to explore more deeply for organisation studies since they are under-researched. Paintings are an opportunity for CMS and organisation scholars to investigate these potentially uncomfortable or taboo subjects since these images reside outside linguistic structures of communication. And such themes can be discussed without invading a person's internal world since paintings are created for observation.

7.6 Practical implications

In addition to understanding qualities and themes of an organisational dystopia, this thesis offers further contribution to approaching art in organisation studies. Paintings are a means of assessing organisational dystopia through imagination and image. There are further practical contributions that paintings can offer to the field of organisation studies, which I outline in this section.

As I stated in Chapter 1, there are five aims and contributions of this thesis. The fives aims are: (1) to promote paintings as interdisciplinary research, (2) to articulate a framework to analyse and interpret paintings, (3) to suggest an understanding of qualities of organisational dystopia (research question 1), (4) to address themes of organisational dystopia (research question 2), and (5) to demonstrate paintings are an opportunity to bridge academic scholarship with the social world. Thus far, the majority of these points are made in this thesis. Hence, I will focus on the final point first: connecting academics to the public via art.

7.6.1 Curating as a means for communicating research

One of my concerns with CMS and organisational research is the orthodoxy of presenting ideas in publications and conferences. The exhibition of knowledge in publications and conferences prevents research from reaching new audiences, and also such structured materials and events can inhibit a creative imagination. As Parker (2017a) claims, research is ‘edited’ and ‘being edited’ by systems of publication, which direct and shape “the imaginations” of academics in accordance with the rationality of rankings and profitability (p. 212). Therefore, rather than join a group of

academics that criticise publishing and conferences, I suggest an alternative to typical practices of research dissemination. This alternative option is curation.

There is a growing body of research that is critical of academic publishing and conferences. Murphy and Zhu (2012) describe a domination of Anglo-American research in top management journals that skews and misrepresents non-Western academia as being 'lower rank' and of 'less interest.' In addition to the criticism of research publications constraining and limiting the voice of recognised areas of research, there is also criticism about how the aim of profitable academic publishing impacts the nature of knowledge sharing and creation. As Harvie et. al. (2013) explain, "High journal prices are also detrimental to new knowledge creation within social science, since these prices limit access by academics and students to potential knowledge commons" (p. 232).

Bell and King (2010) draw on reflexive experiences as scholars that attend academic conferences in order to evidence that conferences are normalising systems of hierarchical and gendered control. Looking specifically at CMS conferences, Bell and King (2010) remark that the culture of conferences is a combination of elements and practices of support/non-support, encourage/threat, and warm/cold. While conferences offer a means to exchange knowledge and solidify an academic identity, there is also a dark side in which the normalising of power relations reinforces patriarchal values. Therefore, in contrast to the aims of CMS to engage with and support silenced or marginalised positions, conferences can exclude those who are silenced or marginalised, even if it is not intended, due to the rationalities of conferences. Hence, there is a contradiction in mental exercise of CMS publications in comparison to the bodily practice of CMS conferences.

When criticising systems of publication and conferences, academics tend to provide solutions that correspond to those systems. For instance, Murphy and Zhu (2012) contest the hegemony of western research in publications by suggesting Anglo-American journals can enter into partnerships with their non-western counterparts; alternatively, top ranking could devote more Special Issues to non-Anglo-American interests and developments, or, in regards publishers' profitability, simply doing nothing and allowing illegal downloads to continue will upend subscription services (Harvie et. al. 2013). Another suggestion by Beverungen, Böhm and Land (2012) is to expand university press publishing or develop additional self-organised, open-

accessed journals like *ephemera*. As for conferences, Bell and King (2010) suggest altering the format of conferences so that they are more inclusive, such as developing spaces for women or other minority groups, using technology to decrease hierarchical control, and giving more attention to the construction of the physical environment at conferences. However, such proposed solutions are all envisioned within a realised system of publishing and conferences. Therefore, I propose that paintings are a way to conceive of an alternative system to publications and conferences. By addressing an alternative system, it may be possible to escape the rationalities and limitations of publications and conferences. This alternative system is curation, which is a way to present knowledge about management, organisation, and work that involves a different set of interactions compared to publishing and conference presenting. Further, paintings are a way to reach alternative or additional audiences since the image is an alternative to the jargon and technical terms of academia that can alienate readers and limit dialogue.

Curating is a specific process of demystification, in which art is explored as a process of production, organisation and meaning (Rugg and Sedgwick 2007). In this way, curating differs from a method of analysing and interpreting art since it focuses on the structures, placements and narrative in which the art is placed. Thus, curation is a way to respond to research questions in broad themes using a diverse set of artists and paintings. Hence, curators tend to work with galleries and museums in order to present certain knowledge about an artist, event, epoch or culture to the public (Balzer 2015). Therefore, curation is dependent on a series of choices, ranging from taste to relative content, in order to determine which artists and/or paintings are included or excluded (Balzer 2015; Rugg and Sedgwick 2007).

Jeal-Paul Martinon (2013:4), leader of the PhD Curatorial/Knowledge Programme at Goldsmiths, University of London, describes curation:

> The curatorial is a jailbreak from pre-existing frames, a gift enabling one to see the world differently, a strategy for inventing new points of departure, a practice of creating allegiances against social ills, a way of caring for humanity, a process of renewing one's own subjectivity, a tactical move for reinventing life, a sensual practice of creating signification, a political tool outside of politics, the act of keeping a

> question alive, the energy of retaining a sense of fun, the device that helps to resist history, the measures to create affects, the work of revealing ghosts, a plan to remain out-of-joint with time, an evolving method of keeping bodies and objects together, a sharing of understanding, an invitation for reflexivity, a choreographic mode of operation, a way of fighting against corporate culture, etc.

In Martinon's (2013) enthusiastic description of curation, there are many parallels with the qualities and interests of CMS. For instance, a means of examining alternative experiences of the world by addressing minorities or marginalised groups (e.g. Pullen, Harding and Phillips 2017 on feminism in CMS), the recognition of subjectivity (e.g. Wray-Bliss 2004 on the silence of participants and research methods), 'an invitation for reflexivity' (e.g. Fournier and Grey 2000 speak of 'reflexivity' in CMS) and 'a way of fighting against corporate culture' (e.g. organisation studies of culture have pointed to this in Parker 2002a, 2006). Since curation possesses a separate set of practices to those of academic publications and conferences, curating is an alternative way for researchers to share findings and contributions.

The practice of curating could result in a variety of forms to present research. For instance, academics can take space in galleries, private or public institutions, universities and elsewhere. Curation can also take the form of a published collection of images and text online, in blogs or in pamphlets; curation can also be in the form of a gallery talk, walk or video. Thus, what curation offers is a way of conceiving academic research within a different set of interactions that impose different conditions of imaginative possibility. In addition, curation involves alternative practices to engage with research.

What is also relevant about curation is it could offer a way to upend the elitism of cultural institutions such as museums. Museums construct identities, histories and values (Bennett 1995). Museums often historically originate from the private collections of elites, including royal families or wealthy collectors; as a result, these elites controlled taste, value, and narrative. Professional galleries can also be elitist institutions since they tend to cater to the financial elitism that drives value in art (Duncan 1994). Museums and galleries have historically been situated as institutions

of culture and education in order to civilise their audience by teaching social values (Bennett 1995; Duncan 1994). Hence, museums and galleries are important sites in which to critique and reflect.

The elitism of museums and galleries, with their construction of hegemonic cultural narratives, is challenged by contemporary projects that seek to enhance public art. Public art consists of neighbourhood and city projects that position art outside of museums and galleries as a way of exposing artists to the public; and sometimes, public art is also influenced by non-artistic audiences who are involved in shaping the final artwork (Freeland 2001). Yet, such projects are often funded by corporations or governments, who impose on the final creation of meaning. Hence, even public art has its shortcomings. Online blogs or instagram is a way for technology to showcase the work of contemporary or marginalised artists who voice alternative perspectives to the hegemony of institutional culture and values. Since many of these platforms are free, this is a way for artists to reach public audiences without the influence of institutional support. In brief, curation comes in many forms and can be used as a practice of resistance to upend the hegemony of cultural institutions that control narratives about society, power and organisation.

Therefore, paintings are a foundation in which to discuss alternative methods to communicate knowledge. One such alternative is curation. Curation can provide a way for researchers to transcend the boundaries and limitations of publications and conferences, since curation involves a different system of interactions and decisions. Hence, when thinking of research presentation via curation, academics may find it is a way to challenge the status quo and reach new audiences (Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott 2009). Additionally, it can provide a path to challenge the hegemony of cultural institutions that control representations of labour, which can impact on the cultural knowledge of management, organisation and work.

7.6.2 Beyond organisation studies: paintings for other business disciplines

During this thesis, I created a framework that can be used to analyse form and content, and also guide interpretation of paintings. This framework is important as a means to access additional paintings and genres for organisation study. This research design is a way to further understand other fields within the business school, such as

leadership and finance. Since a framework for understanding paintings can be used as a class activity and as a research design for publications. Therefore, this framework is an important contribution not only to support an interdisciplinary study of organisations and art, but also encourage art-based methods for business studies.

One of the classroom activities that I designed took inspiration from my framework. I use the painting *Auguste Pellerin II* (1916) by Henri Matisse to present different representations of leadership. This specific foray into a single painting was a starting point to discuss leadership with my undergraduate students in Foundations of Organisational Behaviour (IB1230). This painting was "Matisse's most commanding image of another human being and one of the greatest portraits of the twentieth century" (Klein 2001:175). Using my method to analyse and interpret, I address the painting as a way of exploring leadership and presenting a path for Critical Management Education (CME).

When I introduce the painting to my students, I intend it to be an exercise through form, content and interpretation. These three components are part of the method I created (see Chapter 4). As I begin the analysis, I start with some background information about Auguste Pellerin. This 'King of margarine' made his fortune manufacturing margarine in France (Vollard 2002). Due to his wealth he became "one of the most important collectors of Impressionist and post-Impressionist art in the early twentieth century" (Helvey 2009:173). Another important piece of information is that this painting is the second of two portraits of Pellerin that Matisse painted. The first featured warmer and welcoming colours, and additional details of the face and desk. This painting is more humanistic than the second portrait, which I use for analysis. In the second portrait there is a frightening demonic representation of Pellerin, who almost appears inhuman.

Auguste Pellerin II (1917) features a bald, elderly gentleman sitting at a desk with his hands clasped in front of him. He wears a black suit that almost disappears into the black background of the office. Behind him is a gold-framed painting, that is shadowed by his figure. The most frightful aspect are his eyes, which resemble two black coals. What is more, the absence of his neck makes it seem as though his head is levitating from his body. The blood red dot on his suit stands for his Légion d'Honneur award.

From the form of the painting, students can see that the painting resonates with themes of masculine power and also an alienation from humanity (Spurling 2005). His extreme 'larger than life' influence is evidenced in the shadow behind him which occupies a large part of the painting and also extends way beyond Pellerin's head. The rigid posture suggests a strictness to his work and also shows that he is in charge. As Helvey (2009), notes, this "second portrait of Pellerin - drained of human sympathy, perhaps - has few equals as an iconic image of masculine authority" (p. 179).

By drawing on form and content, I lead my class into a discussion on visual representations of leaders. By addressing the question, *How is a leader represented?* the undergraduate student's discussions centre around the body and colours. The students also generate critiques of the overtly masculine depiction of leadership, and historical values regarding what constituted leadership at that time.

While the activity does have class discussion, this activity also gives a space for silence and self-reflection. Having practised a framework of analysis and interpretation through *Auguste Pellerin II* (1917), the students are invited to imagine how they would represent themselves as leaders. I prompt this self-reflection by asking the students, What colours and shapes would you use to represent your leadership style? What messages about your style of leadership would you want to communicate?

The success of this activity for students to envision leadership beyond text, and also have a space for self-reflection, is a reason to continue using paintings as data for scholarship. In addition, it also legitimates the use of my created framework as a foundation to address a different type of painting (portrait) by a different artist (Matisse) and genre (post-Impressionism). As a result, paintings can provide an additional understanding of leadership through alternative means, thereby generating observation, imagination and reflection. Given the activity's warm reception by the students, it seems there is a place for art in education.

Using paintings for academic exchange and learning is an important aspect of CME. First, paintings are a way of examining and re-examining what is understood by organisation theory through an interdisciplinary approach. For instance, art can address the visual representation of leadership through colour, posture (body) and symbolism. Second, art is a way of reflecting on leadership, as well as envisioning alternatives and criticism about leadership,including darkness (dystopia) or idealism

(utopia) in how leadership is conceived. Thus, paintings as part of an academic exercise are a means of bringing criticality to education by unsettling conventional teaching practices by promoting reflection and additional understanding in visual and imaginative areas (Cunliffe, Forray, and Knights 2002). Therefore, paintings offer a way via CME to "reconfigure management education in terms of an attention to values and context" since artworks, as products of an epochal culture, history and values, are messages for understanding business fields (Grey 2004:182).

Besides offering a path into CME, I also used my framework as a research design for a research paper I wrote for a Special Issue in *Qualitative Research in Financial Markets.* My paper, titled "Accounting for Play as Work in 'The Expense Account'" (forthcoming), examines a painting by Norman Rockwell as a representation of financialisation. Financialisation is concept that identifies the regulation of the self through financial practices. One particular means of financialisation is accounting, which is depicted in the *The Expense Account* (1957), which was featured on the cover of American publication *The Saturday Evening Post.*

The painting represents a humorous moment in the day of a travelling salesman as he travels on a train and balances his expense account. Through an analysis of form, one can observe an overweight Caucasian man sitting in a brown seat with a briefcase at his side. The expense account is pictured behind him in the background and is enlarged for the viewer to read. There are various expenses labelled on the sheet, including transportation, entertainment and accommodation.

The incongruence of size, in which the ledger appears larger than the salesman, is a meaningful representation to show how financialisation is a way of accounting for (or making sense of) one's activities as work-related. For instance, even when activities may relate to play, like eating out or going to the theatre, such activities can be regarded as work when presented in a financial context. The aspect of financialisation is important at this time since American salesmen were constantly travelling; therefore, they were without supervision or clear work boundaries. Hence, financialisation is interpreted as a way of making sense of life through the self-management of play versus work and play as work.

My article demonstrates that there is an academic interest to addressing paintings in order to evaluate finance and accounting within organisational life. Thus, there is an interdisciplinary interest in art for other disciplines in business besides

organisation studies and CMS. Furthermore, the acceptance of this research acknowledges that my framework, which may be revised in its application to different artists, genres and paintings, is suitable for examining alternative theories and concepts. Therefore, there is an opportunity to open business studies to a method of analysis and interpretation of paintings in order to understand a plurality of business-oriented subjects.

7.7 Summary

In this chapter, I discuss the analysis and interpretation of 19 paintings by the contemporary Surrealist artist Tetsuya Ishida in response to two research questions. These two research questions are: *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* and *What are themes of organisational dystopia?*

I begin this chapter in review of paintings as a unique form of culture to address concepts and criticisms of organisational dystopia. Paintings are unique since they have a different set of interactions compared to stories, psychoanalysis, empirical methods, and photographs. Hence, paintings are a unique way to access imagination and the internal experience of organisations without conforming to linguistic structures of rationality for explanation. Instead, colour, form, and shape are a way to communicate meanings and experiences of organisational life. In this thesis, paintings are a way to understanding organisational dystopia as a specific type of dystopia.

To understand more about organisational dystopia, this thesis makes a contribution by exploring objectification. Objectification is a quality of organisational dystopia (research question 1). Objectification is observed through the dehumanisation of labour, whether as a tool or object; the latter has a consequence on the interchangeability of workers. In addition, there is also a dehumanisation through the treatment of labour as animals. The different practices to objectification expand on the knowledge of objectification, which is limited since authors have resigned objectification to imagination. This discussion of objectification is an important addition to organisational dystopia, since it presents a warning to the practices of management that alienate salarymen.

As a theme of organisational dystopia, there is a concern in the encroachment on privacy at work. Privacy in organisations is significant in order for workers to retain elements of anonymity and time away (escape) from work. The paintings by

Ishida represent the private spaces of a toilet and rooftop as areas in which a salaryman can go to be alone; however, these spaces of privacy are invaded by the organisation. As a result, the loss of privacy adds to the despair of organisational dystopia, as well as alienation since there is a loss of freedom to take part in non-work related identities and activities. Hence, salarymen are further taken under control by the organisation. Therefore, paintings are a way forward to research these usually unarticulated spaces in organisational research (i.e. the toilet and rooftop), as well as a foundation in which to speak further on privacy and its importance in organisations.

An additional theme to discuss about organisational dystopia is escape and endure, which are components of a paradox of dystopia. This paradox suggests that a dystopia is a site of no escape (hopelessness) or a site in which to escape from (hopefulness) (Parker, Fournier and Reedy 2007). From an analysis and interpretation of inemuri, alcohol, and suicide (or suicidal ideation), I suggest an organisational dystopia may be better conceived not as an 'either-or', but rather as an 'and-both' so as to highlight the complexity of an organisational dystopia as a site of imagination in which there is contradiction. Since there are moments in which one appears to escape dystopia, such as in inemuri or going to drink, however, this escape must end as there is a return to dystopia. Therefore, one must cope with dystopia, and one such way is to sleep or drink. Suicide and death are also one of the interpretations of Ishida's paintings; while this is one interpretation, it does raise important concerns to suicide and death which remain under-researched in organisation studies. Hence, paintings are a means to investigate further into work-related suicide and death, and also into the complexity of enduring and escaping a dystopia.

Besides the contribution of paintings for organisation study and the development of a concept for organisational dystopia, this research also proposes two practical implications. First, instead of conforming to publications and conferences, artworks have a unique system of organising called curation. Curation is a possibility for organisation scholars and CMS researchers to leave the boundaries and conformities of publications and conferences for a new system for articulating and organising research for current and new audiences. Second, this thesis, particularly a framework to analyse and interpret paintings, inspires alternative teaching practices and publications into other business-related fields. Hence, paintings are a way to reach new audiences, students, and peers in publications and classroom activities.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis emerged out of an interest in paintings and a desire to bring paintings into the field of organisation studies. As a result, this thesis has sought to make contribution not only to a concept of organisational dystopia, but also as a research design to further develop an interdisciplinary approach to organisation studies that approaches paintings. As I conclude this thesis, there are some final remarks that need to be said about the overall work. Let us turn to a review of the research components before I address research limitations and opportunities for future research.

8.2 Thesis components: CMS, dystopia, and Surrealism

CMS is an area of research that accepts the use of unorthodox research methods and materials. For example, a body of work in CMS that investigates popular culture legitimates culture sources as data to draw out alternative perspectives and criticisms of organisational life. There are a variety of culture forms addressed in CMS, including television (Czarniawska, Eriksson-Zetterquist and Renmark 2011; Rhodes and Parker 2008), film (Rhodes 2016), to novels (Czarniawska 2006; Parker 2017b; Parker et. al. 1999), and music (Rhodes 2004; Skòld and Rehn 2007). Yet, there is a significant culture form still missing: paintings.

Painting is a specific type of artwork that has been evaded by organisation studies and CMS scholarship. Work has been a subject of art for centuries (see Chapter 2). From the post-Impressionist paintings of Vincent van Gogh to the American idealism in the illustrations by Norman Rockwell, there is a historical, visual progression that depicts the development of labour and work. Hence, paintings are a way to examine contextually specific qualities and themes of work. One such period to study are the Japanese salarymen of the Lost Decade (Dasgupta 2000, 2013). It is important to address Japanese salarymen since they are under-represented in organisational research (Matanle, McCann and Ashmore 2008), yet they are a significant size group of workers in Japan. By investigating this particular group, this gives attention to marginalised or under-researched identities that are nonetheless impacted by management and organisation.

In Japan, a salaryman is a collective identity for male, middle-class bureaucratic workers (Dasgupta 2000, 2013; Thomas 2013). Associated with that identity is an obligation to work; this commitment to work results in the devaluation of personal identity, family and relationships (Thomas 2013). As a result, there is a real and present concern in the imbalance between personal life and work life that can lead to work-related death and suicide (Fifield 2016; Kawanishi 2008). Today, concerns about the rise in work-related death and suicide in Japan, known as 'karoshi', are recognised as a government, labour, and culture problem (Fifield 2016; Kawanishi 2008). Therefore, the paintings of Japanese salarymen in the 1990s are predictions of the crisis facing salarymen today, including alienation, suicide, and depersonalisation.

In Chapter 7, there are clear links made between Ishida's dystopian depictions and today's organisational progress. For example, the microchips placed in a workers skin (Miller 2017) and the rooftop as a site of managerial control (Shead 2017a, 2017b) are examples of Ishida's predicted dystopia that are now real. Ergo, there is a real fear that salarymen are on track to reach a dystopia that Ishida warned about. This organisational dystopia is one in which salarymen are objectified, without privacy, and face the complexity of hopelessness and hopefulness.

By drawing attention to criticisms and problems of work, the thesis meets a directive of CMS to embrace alternative methods and materials in order to draw attention to the complex and contradicting experiences faced by different workers from a variety of places, eras, and social groups (Adler, Forbes and Willmott 2007; Brewis and Jack 2009; Fournier and Grey 2000; Grey and Willmott 2005; Pullen, Harding and Phillips 2017). This research is also important to CMS since it is a means to reach new audiences since art is a way to open readership beyond academia into the public (Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott 2009).

Organisational dystopia is a specific type of dystopia that looks at the condition of human labour. Specific to a dystopia on Japanese salarymen, an organisational dystopia has qualities of objectification and alienation, and has themes on a control of privacy and the complexities of escape/endure. The organisational dystopia is visualised in the Surrealist style, which uses contradiction and individual style to communicate criticism about reality (Breton 1924).

The combination of CMS, dystopia and Surrealism is a new location for research. The meeting point for these areas of research is in paintings. Paintings are

unique from empirical methods since they account for the imagination. In addition, paintings are visual depictions that offer an alternative means to communicate an understanding of organisation, work, and management that is not constrained to structures of language (Danto 1981; Goodman 1968). Since a painting exists outside structures of language (Sontag 1964). Therefore, this research opens an opportunity for organisation studies to expand into different types of knowing.

This opportunity is an interdisciplinary approach that uses paintings for organisation study. Paintings are not only a way to study the imagination, but also a way to examine predictions and possibility of what could be. This is because a painting is not confined to the present in the way that other images, like photographs, are; hence a painting is capable of evidencing a dystopian projection of a future reality. Therefore, paintings are a space for mental reflection and for future prediction.

8.3 Findings and contributions

Through the analysis and interpretation of 19 paintings by the contemporary Surrealist artist Tetsuya Ishida, I add to an understanding of organisational dystopia as a specific type of dystopia. I structure this understanding of organisational dystopia in two chapters.

In Chapter 5, I analyse and interpret seven paintings in response to the first research question: *What are qualities of organisational dystopia?* One of the qualities of organisational dystopia seen in these paintings is objectification. Objectification is the reduction of human labour to the function of an organisational object; hence objectification is the removal of subjectivity (Nussbaum 1995). Organisational scholars have generally evaded objectification since it is unrealistic (e.g. Grant and Shields 2010). Due to this, paintings are important data to draw attention to qualities of organising that are discontinued from study since it is difficult to locate a methodology that allows for an investigation of the imagination.

Objectification is represented in Ishida's paintings through a synthesis of body and object (Horikiri 2010). For example, in *Interview* (1998) the interviewers are in the shape of microscopes and in *Cargo* (1997) the salarymen are conformed to the shape of packages. There are three qualities of objectification that can be assessed in this collection. The first quality is the rendering of the worker as a function or tool (Nussbaum 1995). In this sense, the worker is stripped of their creativity, imagination,

and power in order to serve an organisational function, such as the act of observing and testing a salaryman along a conveyor-belt in *Conveyor-belt People* (1996). The second quality is the removal of subjectivity (Nussbaum 1995). For example, there is a removal of individual features of salarymen in order to conform them in collective ambiguity. For example, in *Conveyor-belt People* (1996) the salarymen appear as replicants of each other without individual features, such as scars, facial hair, or different coloured suits. The removal of subjectivity is also depicted in a mortification of the self (Goffman 2009[1961]) in the painting *Drawer* (1996). The third quality is the impact of objectification to alienate salarymen. This alienation can lead to isolation and despair due to the surveillance and control of salarymen by the organisation. These three components of objectification are a way to communicate objectification out of its imaginative, internal sphere. When objectification is brought forward in a visual manner, it offers a way to share an understanding of objectification as well as raise criticism about it. By drawing awareness to the objectification of labour, it prompts a discussion into the ways today's organisations are heading to an organisational dystopia.

For instance, one theme of an organisational dystopia is a totalitarian control of private space. The toilet and rooftop are depicted as areas free of managerial control, and are thus spaces in which workers can enact alternative or resistant identities and behaviours. These spaces can act as a 'time out' during the day to escape work. However, in an organisational dystopia these spaces are drawn under the managerial gaze. For example, in *Toilet Refugee* 1 (1996) a shadow of a man chasing behind the salaryman who anxiously rides the toilet bowl away from the darkened figure is an invasion of privacy, which the anxious salaryman attempts to escape from. When there is a control of private space, this reduces the subjectivity of workers by removing areas of non-supervision where individuality, escape, and resistance can occur. When such areas of freedom are removed and placed under control, this adds to objectification and contributes to experiences of alienation.

An additional theme in response to the second research question, *What are themes of organisational dystopia?*, is the complexity of hopefulness and hopelessness in escaping or enduring a dystopia. Sleep (e.g. *Mobility Dream,* 1996) and alcohol (*Leaving the Pub,* 1995) are two ways to escape work, yet these escapes are brief since there is a return to work. The sense of escape is an important theme in a depiction of

movement; thus, the inability to move suggests that one must endure a dystopia. For example, the airplanes with extended poles in *Can't fly Anymore* 1 (1996). The complexity of escape as a way to endure suggests that an organisational dystopia has contradictions. When interpreting means to escape and endure, there is also a possible interpretation of suicide in *Rooftop Refugee* (1996) in awareness of the artist's own death in 2005. Suicide is an important dimension of organisational life that often goes unspoken of in organisation studies; yet it is presented as an important consequence on the qualities and themes of organisational dystopia.

8.4 Limitations and future research

This study is unique as it approaches the under-researched area of organisational dystopia through an analysis and interpretation of paintings. Nonetheless, there are limitations to this research. There are two limitations I discuss here: weakness of creating a framework for an interdisciplinary research design and consequence of critical multiplism. While there are limitations to consider, there are also many opportunities for future research given this thesis is the first of its kind to address paintings for organisation studies.

First, I am mindful of the shortcomings in using an unarticulated methodology when analysing and interpreting a new source of data for organisation studies. In a discipline of art, a method for form, content, and interpretation are unspoken so as not to limit the imaginative scope in which to reach an understanding (Buster and Crawford 2010; Holbrook 1834; Sontag 1964). Nevertheless, for the purpose of academic scholarship, it is necessary to communicate how I go about analysing and interpreting the paintings for an understanding of organisational dystopia. An articulated method is important to evidence rigour and systematic evaluation of the paintings so as to remain transparent and verifiable.

Thus, creating a framework for form, content, and interpretation is a step to compensate for the shortcomings of an unarticulated method in the discipline of art in order to bring paintings into the realm of organisation study. This framework is a foundation for other scholars to adopt, alter, and use to further an interdisciplinary research design that accesses paintings for organisation research. Yet, there are further conversations needed about this framework. For example, there are further inquiries to be made about the position of the researcher in relation to a painting and the painting's

artist. There are also ethical implications of recognising (or not recognising) the artist and their intentions, context in which the art is produced and stationed, and manner of production in which the art is accessible (Benjamin 2008[1936]; Buster and Crawford 2010). Therefore there is an opportunity for further discussions on the complexities of paintings as data.

Second, I am aware that a critical multiplist epistemology makes this research available to contradicting interpretations (Krausz 2010; Margolis 2010; Novitz 2002). I felt it necessary to adopt this epistemological position so as not to pontificate a 'right' understanding to Ishida's paintings, especially since I do not identify or have experience as a Japanese salaryman. However, by considering the interpretations by art critics and other art specialists as they relate to organisational literature, I believe there is a legitimate contribution in studying art as a way to expand on present understandings of organisational life.

As for areas of future research, one of the most obvious is to address art and organisation studies as interdisciplinary scholarship. As I have spoken on this in the areas of publishing and teaching in the previous chapter, I turn to the additional component of furthering scholarship on organisational dystopia and imagination.

When addressing organisational dystopia, I limited my discussion to three areas: objectification (and alienation), totalitarian control of private space, and the paradox of dystopia. However, I'm aware that this discussion is built on a precise 'data set' that is comprised from a selection of paintings from Ishida's large oeuvre. Beyond those 19 paintings, Ishida's oeuvre also evidences a theme of control and objectification to ready children into the workforce. This is visible in comparison of *Awakening* (1998) and *Interview* (1998), which both depict a synthesis of body and microscope, even though in the former it is male students who are objectified while in the latter it is salarymen. Hence, there is a connection in the preparation of males students to salarymen (Dasgupta 2000, 2013). In the organisational dystopia on Japanese salarymen, this preparation forms a foundation for objectification and alienation. The theme of childhood is also apparent in the painting *Drawer* (1996). In this painting, toy cars are placed into a makeshift coffin. In another painting called *Prisoner* (1999), a young child's body is imprisoned in the shape of a white, rectangular school building. One interpretation of the painting is that it is the objectification of the student; another interpretation of the painting is that the male

student is a prisoner of his education, and thus is enslaved to prepare as a salaryman. These paintings can be interpreted as evidence of a theme in Ishida's oeuvre which is male youth, and depending on the variables for interpretation, these paintings may support the fate of male students to become objectified salarymen in an organisational dystopia. Therefore, it is important to consider a greater selection of paintings from Ishida's oeuvre, or at least analyse and interpret paintings by other artists, in order to compare, contrast, and reflect more deeply on the qualities and themes of organisational dystopia.

Imagination remains an under-researched aspect of organisational life. Following the works of Boje (2003, 2008) and Gabriel (1991, 1995, 1999), further work is necessary to address the imagination and its many forms. In this thesis I analyse and interpret paintings as a visual source of estrangement from reality so as to investigate the imagination in another way than storytelling and psychoanalytic fantasy. What paintings offer is a different set of interactions that engage with visual elements, such as colour, shape, and form, that can communicate meanings outside of linguistic structures. Furthermore, frameworks to analyse form and content and make interpretation are flexible to the paintings being researched and the research questions being asked. Thus, paintings offer a flexibility to understand the internal self relative to organisations. The possibility for multiple interpretations is a unique feature of paintings in order to access the diversity of understandings about organisations that cannot be accessed through stories, fantasies, empirical methods, or other images like photographs. Therefore, paintings are a way to explore complexity, chaos, and contradiction about organisations in the real and imagination. Ergo, paintings as a way to examine the imagination is a way to bring the humanities into organisation studies.

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Appendix A

A.1 Researcher email sent 25 January 2017

Dear Michiaki Ishida,

Thank you for your message on Facebook. I am currently writing a PhD thesis on the paintings by Tetsuya Ishida found in the published collection *Tetsuya Ishida Complete.* I am a doctoral student at Warwick Business School, UK in the Organisation and Human Resource Management group (https://www.wbs.ac.uk/research/specialisms/teaching-groups/ohrm/).

Further to your message, the concrete study contents of my thesis focuses on the artistic representation of workplace dystopia. I admire Ishida's use of Surrealist expression in order to convey criticisms of work, particularly the office job, as a contemporary call-to-action to revisit and change organisational life.

This thesis will be published for noncommercial use since the purpose of this document will be to share the artworks of Ishida in an educational setting. By drawing on Ishida's works, I bring attention to the contribution of art to business education and criticism. For instance, the mechanical nature in the development of the worker (e.g. 'Conveyor-belt people", 1996) and the emotional escapism of work (e.g. 'Rooftop Refugee', 1996).

I seek your permission to use the works of Ishida for my doctoral thesis in order to share and celebrate his art in new contexts. In particular, I am interested in permission to use the following paintings:

- 'Locomotive Man' (1995)
- 'Big Wheel' (1995)
- 'Leaving the Pub' (1995)
- 'Beer Garden Take-off' (1995)
- 'Toilet Refugee' (1996), number 22 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Toilet Refugee' (1996), number 23 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Mobile-Phone Robot and Laptop-Computer Boy' (1996)
- 'Can't fly Anymore' (1996), number 25 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Can't fly Anymore' (1996), number 26 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Under the President's Umbrella' (1996)
- 'Faith in Speed' (1996)

- 'Supermarket' (1996), number 29 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Supermarket' (1996), number 30 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Refuel Meal' (1996)
- 'Section Chief's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building' (1996)
- 'Worker's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building' (1996)
- 'Conveyor-belt People' (1996)
- 'Rooftop Refugee' (1996)
- 'Mobility Dream' (1996)
- 'Drawer' (1996)
- 'Winter Fan' (1996), number 40 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Winter Fan' (1996), number 41 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Guchi (Complaint)' (1996), number 42 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Guchi (Complaint)' (1996), number 43 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Soldier' (1996)
- 'Cargo' (1997)
- 'Guchi (Complaint)' (1996), number 46 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Guchi (Complaint)' (1996), number 55 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*
- 'Exercise Equipment' (1997)
- 'Interview' (1998)
- 'Management' (1999)
- 'Untitled' (2001), number 115 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*

If you have further questions or require additional information, then I will happily respond.

Thanks in advance for your consideration and help.

Lauren Schrock

A.2 Email from Michiaki Ishida received on 8 February 2017

Dear Lauren Schrock
Thank you for notification.
I confirmed email contents.
It is for the study in the school and admits it if it is not a commercial purpose.
If a document is completed, the condition of the permission, please mail one book.
I admit the publication of the following works if you can consent to a condition.
Thanking you in advance.

TETSU Inc.
MiICHIAKI ISHIDA

Address
Yaizu 4-3-17,Yaizu City Shizuoka 425-0026,Japan

- 'Locomotive Man' (1995)　ＳＬになった人　１２
- 'Big Wheel' (1995)　大車輪　１０
- 'Leaving the Pub' (1995)　居酒屋発　１３
- 'Beer Garden Take-off' (1995)　ビアガーデン発　１４
- 'Toilet Refugee' (1996), number 22 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*　トイレに逃げ込む人　２２
- 'Mobile-Phone Robot and Laptop-Computer Boy' ケエイタイデンワロボとノート型パソコン少年　２４
- 'Can't fly Anymore' (1996), number 25 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*　飛べなくなった人（飛行機）　２５
- 'Under the President's Umbrella' (1996)　社長の傘の下　２７
- 'Supermarket' (1996), number 29 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*　スーパーマツケット　*29*和田
- 'Supermarket' (1996), number 30 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*　スーパーマツケト *30*
- 'Refuel Meal' (1996)　燃料補給のような食事　32
- 'Section Chief's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building' 使われなくなった部長の椅子　33
- 'Worker's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building'　使われなくなった社員の椅子　34

- 'Conveyor-belt People' (1996)　ベルトコンベア上の人　35
- 'Rooftop Refugee' (1996)　屋上に逃げる人　36
- 'Mobility Dream' (1996)　移動の夢　37
- 'Drawer' (1996)　引き出し　38
- 'Winter Fan' (1996), number 40 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*　冬の扇風機　*40*
- 'Guchi (Complaint)' (1996), number 42 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*　ぐち　*42*
- 'Guchi (Complaint)' (1996), number 43 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* ぐち　*43*
- 'Soldier' (1996)　兵士　44
- 'Cargo' (1997)　荷　53和田
- 'Guchi (Complaint)' (1996), number 46 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*　ぐち　*46*
- 'Guchi (Complaint)' (1996), number 55 in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* ぐち　*55*
- 'Exercise Equipment' (1997)　健康器具　59
- 'Interview' (1998)　面接　68
- 'Management' (1999)　管理　89